WHY WE LOVE LINCOLN

BY JAMES CREELMAN

"Die when I may, I want it said of me by those who knew me best, that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow"

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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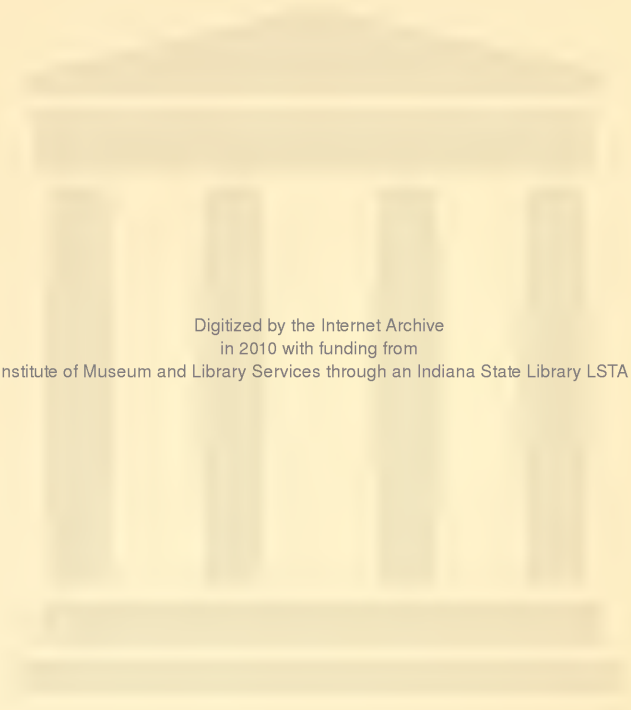

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WHY WE LOVE LINCOLN

From "The Life of Abraham Lincoln." Copyright 1900, The McClure Co.

Lincoln early in 1861. This is supposed to be the first, or one of the first, portraits made of Lincoln after he began to wear a beard

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BY

JAMES CREELMAN

Author of "On the Great Highway"

"As, in spite of some rudeness, republicanism is the sole hope of a sick world, so Lincoln, with all his foibles, is the greatest character since Christ."—*John Hay.*

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To

MY SON

ASHMERE

AND TO ALL AMERICAN BOYS

YOUNG OR OLD

I ADDRESS THIS LITTLE VOLUME

Acknowledgements are due to the excellent books on Lincoln by Herndon and Weik, Hay and Nicolay, Ida Tarbell, Mr. Lamon, Mr. Stoddard, and others.

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WHY WE LOVE LINCOLN

WHY WE LOVE LINCOLN

I

WHILE our great battleship fleet thundered peace and friendship to the world, as it moved from sea to sea, stinging pens and voices in one country after another answered that America had suddenly passed from blustering youth to cynical old age, and that the harmless effrontery of our nationality in the past was not to be confounded with the cold-brained, organized, money-worshipping greed of the new generation of Americans.

Meanwhile, in all parts of the American continent, preparations were being made to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, the humblest, simplest and plainest of our national leaders, whose name no American can utter without emotion.

We think of Washington with pride, of Jefferson and Madison with intellectual reverence, and of Jackson and Grant with grateful consciousness of their strength.

But the memory of Lincoln, even now, so many years after his piteous death, stirs the tenderest love of the nation, thrills it with a sense of intimate relationship to his greatness and awakens a personal affection in the average American's breast—not a mere political enthusiasm, but a peculiarly heartfelt sentiment that has no parallel in human history.

If it be true that the nation has at once become old, that it has grown sinister and corrupt, that it cringes before material success, stands in awe of multi-millionaires and prostrates itself before money, why is it that we love Lincoln?

If in the pride of wealth and strength we have forgotten our early republican ideals of simple justice and manhood, how is it that the movement to commemorate the

birth of this lowly, clumsy backwoodsman and frontier lawyer turned President—a movement begun in the rich cities of New York and Chicago—instantly spread to the remotest villages, and all that seemed ugly and haggard, with all that seemed brave and fair and true, swarmed together, heart-naked, to make that twelfth day of February an unforgetable event?

Arches and statues; flower-strewn streets with endless processions; moving ceremonies in thousands of schools and colleges; multitudes kneeling in churches; other multitudes listening to orators; warships and fortresses roaring out salutes.

Yet these were the mere externals of Lincoln Day. The average American does not shout when he hears Lincoln's name. Even the political demagogue, the stock gambler, the captain of industry, aye, the sorriest scarecrow of a yellow journalist, is likely to grow silent and reverential when that word is spoken.

With all our national levity, we do not jest about Lincoln. With all our political divisions, every party to-day reveres his memory and claims his spirit. It is sober truth to say that he struck the noblest, highest, holiest note in the inmost native soul of the American people. There is nothing so arrogant or sodden and sordid in that new paganism which has set its altars in Wall Street but will in some sense uncover and kneel at the sound of his name.

Our fleet, in its voyage around the world, found no record of such a man in any of the lands of its visitations. Each nation, each epoch, each race, has its hero. But there is none like Lincoln. Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, Cromwell—how cold their glory seems to his, how immeasurably smaller their place in the affections of mankind?

And, while America was getting ready to honor Lincoln, none might pretend to understand his people who had not first discovered what it is in his character and in

ours that, even in this day of restless commercialism, makes us love him above comparison in the story of the world's great men—love him for his poverty, for his simplicity, for his humanity, for his fidelity, for his justice, for his plainness, for his life and for his death.

By sheer force of character, conscience-inspired, Abraham Lincoln rose from abject depths of squalid environment to become the most august figure in American history, and perhaps the most significant and lovable personality in the annals of mankind.

In his amazing emergence to greatness from poverty and ignorance is to be found a supreme demonstration and justification of American institutions.

It was the common people who recognized the nobility and majesty in this singular man. He understood that always, and, even in his days of power, when great battles were fought at a nod of his head, and a

whisk of his pen set a whole race free, it kept him humble.

Perhaps the profoundly tender love which the American people have for his memory is to be explained by the fact that in the secret recesses where every man communes with the highest, bravest and most unselfish elements of his own nature, the average American is an Abraham Lincoln to himself.

The power to recognize is not so far removed from the power to be recognized, and it is thrillingly significant, after all these dreary years of babble about the omnipotence of money, that the same people who raised Lincoln from penniless obscurity to his place of power and martyrdom, still cherish his name and example with a depth of devotion that increases with each year of national growth, confusing and confounding the learned foreign critics of the Republic, who miss the finest thing in American civilization when they fail to learn why we love Lincoln.

II

IF Daniel Boone, the mighty hunter and Indian fighter, had not roused the imagination of Virginians and Carolinians by his wonderful and romantic deeds in the exploration of the Kentucky wilderness, the grandfather of Abraham Lincoln would not have left Rockingham County, Virginia, and "entered" seventeen hundred acres of land in Kentucky, where he was presently slain on his forest farm by a savage in the presence of his three sons.

The youngest of these sons, Thomas Lincoln, was the father of the future President of the United States.

In spite of an educated, well-to-do American ancestry of pure English Quaker stock —one was a member of the Boston Tea Party; another was a revolutionary minuteman, served in the Continental Congress and was Attorney General of the United

States under Jefferson—this frontier boy, who was only six years old when his father was murdered before his eyes, grew up without education, to be a wandering work boy, who gradually picked up odd jobs of carpentering.

He became a powerfully built, square-set young man, somewhat indolent and improvident, who occasionally showed his temper and courage by knocking down a frontier rowdy.

The rough young carpenter in 1806 married Nancy Hanks, a niece of Joseph Hanks, in whose shop he worked at his trade. Nancy, who was the mother of Abraham Lincoln, was the daughter of a supposedly illiterate and superstitious family, but she was comely, intelligent, knew how to read and write and taught her husband to scrawl his name.

The great Lincoln always believed that he got his intellectual powers from his mother.

For a time this pair, who were to bring

forth the savior of America, dwelt in a log hut, fourteen feet square, at Elizabethtown, Kentucky, where they were married. Then a daughter was born. A year later the carpenter bought a small farm on the Big South Fork of Nolin Creek, in Hardin County.

Here, on wretched soil overgrown with stunted brush, Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks lived with their infant daughter in a rude log cabin, enduring profound poverty.

It was in this mere wooden hutch, which had an earth floor, one door and one window, that Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12th, 1809.

What American, however poor, ignorant, unlettered or discouraged, can look upon the rude timbers of the home which sheltered the birth of the greatest man of the Western Hemisphere without a thrill of hope and a new realization of the opportunities that are co-eternal with conscience, courage and persistence?

What man of any race or country can stand before that cabin and be a coward?

Moses, the waif; Peter, the fisherman; Mahomet, the shepherd; Columbus, the sailor boy—each age has its separate message of the humanity of God and the divinity of man.

The gray-eyed boy Lincoln played alone in the forest near Knob Creek, where his father had secured a better farm. It was a solitary and cheerless life for a child. Sometimes he sat among the shavings of his father's carpenter shanty—a silent, lean little boy, with long, black hair and grave, deep-set eyes, dressed in deerskin breeches and moccasins, without toys and almost without companions.

For a few months he attended log-cabin schools with his sister Sarah, but he learned little more than his letters. It is amazing to think that this man, whose Gettysburg address is accepted as one of the noblest classics of English literature, did not have

The Kentucky log cabin in which Lincoln was born on February 12th, 1809

much more than six months of schooling in his whole life.

In 1816 Thomas Lincoln decided to move from Kentucky to Indiana. He built a raft, loaded it with a kit of carpenter's tools and four hundred gallons of whiskey, and, depending on his rifle for food, floated down into the Ohio River in search of a new home. Having picked out a place in the Indiana forest, he walked home and, with a borrowed wagon and two horses, he took his wife and children into the wilderness, actually cutting a way through the woods for them.

Near Little Pigeon Creek the carpenter and his wife, assisted by young Abraham, now seven years old, built a shed of logs and poles, partly open to the weather, and here the family lived for a year. Meanwhile a patch of land was cleared, corn was planted, and as soon as a log-cabin, without windows, could be built, the Lincolns moved into it.

The forest swarmed with game and the carpenter's rifle kept his family supplied

with venison and deer hides for clothing. They relied on the rifle and the corn patch for life. Little Lincoln "climbed at night to his bed of leaves in the loft by a ladder of wooden pins driven into the logs."

Not only were the means of life hard to get, but it was a malarial country, and in 1818 the small group of pioneers who came to dwell at Pigeon Creek near the Lincolns were attacked by a pestilence known as the milk-sickness.

In October the mother of Abraham Lincoln died. Her husband sawed a coffin out of the forest trees and buried her in a little clearing. Several months later a wandering frontier clergyman preached a sermon over her lonely, snow-covered grave.

No wonder the countenance of the great Emancipator moved all who beheld it by its deep melancholy. He knew what sorrow was forty-five years before he paced his office in the White House all night, with white face and bowed head, sorrowing over

the bloody defeat of Chancellorsville, wondering whether he was to be the last President of the United States, and praying for the victory that came at Gettysburg.

All that year the sensitive boy grieved for the mother who had gone out of his life; but in time his father went back to Elizabethtown, Kentucky, where he married the widow of the town jailer, and presently a four-horse wagon creaked up to the door of the Lincoln cabin in the Indiana forest, with the bride, her son and two daughters, and a load of comfortable household goods, including a feather bed and a walnut bureau, valued at fifty dollars.

Sarah Bush Lincoln, the stepmother of Abraham Lincoln, was a woman of thrift and energy, tall, straight, fair, and a kind-hearted motherly Christian. The American people owe a debt to this noble matron who did so much to influence and develop the character of the boy who was yet to save the nation from destruction.

She was good to the Lincoln orphans whose mother lay out in the wild forest grave. She gave them warm clothes. She threw away the mat of corn husks and leaves on which they slept and replaced it with a soft feather tick. She loved little Abe, and the lonely boy returned her kindness and affection. In a primitive cabin, set in the midst of a savage country, she created that noblest and best result of a good woman's heart and brain, a happy home.

Oh, pale woman of the twentieth century, sighing for a mission in the great world's affairs! Perhaps there may be a suggestion for you in the simple story of what Sarah Bush did for Abraham Lincoln and, through him, for the ages. Did not the two malaria-racked and care-driven mothers who lived in the rough-hewn Lincoln cabin do more to influence the political institutions of mankind than all the speeches and votes of women since voting was first invented?

III

EVEN at the age of ten years the frontier lad was a hard worker. When he was not wielding the axe in the forest, he was driving the horses, threshing, ploughing, assisting his father as a carpenter. He also "hired out" to the neighbors as ploughboy, hostler, water-carrier, baby-minder or doer of odd chores, at twenty-five cents a day. He suddenly began to grow tall, and there was no stronger youth in the community than the lank, loose-limbed boy in deerskins, linsey-woolsey, and coonskin cap, who could make an axe bite so deep into a tree.

His stepmother sent him to school again for several months. In 1826, too, he walked nine miles a day to attend a log-house school. He had new companions at home now, a stepbrother, two stepsisters, and his cousins, John and Dennis Hanks.

As young Lincoln grew taller his skill and strength as a woodchopper and railsplitter, and his willingness to do any kind of work, however drudging or menial—in spite of a natural meditative indolence—made him widely known. His kindly, helpful disposition and simple honesty gave him a distinct popularity, and he was much sought after as a companion, notwithstanding his ungainly figure and rough ways.

But it was his extraordinary thirst for knowledge, his efforts to raise himself out of the depths of ignorance, that showed the inner power struggling against adverse surroundings.

He grew to a height of six feet and four inches by the time he was seventeen years old. His legs and arms were long, his hands and feet big, and his skin was dry and yellow. His face was gaunt, and his melancholy gray eyes were sunk in cavernous sockets above his prominent cheek bones. A girl schoolmate has described him: "His

shoes, when he had any, were low. He wore buckskin breeches, linsey-woolsey shirt, and a cap made of the skin of a squirrel or coon. His breeches were baggy and lacked by several inches meeting the tops of his shoes, thereby exposing his shin-bone, sharp, blue and narrow."

This is the real Abraham Lincoln, who read, and read, and read; whose constant spells of brooding abstraction, eyes fixed, dreaming face, gave him a reputation for laziness among some of his shallow fellows; who would crouch down in the forest or sit on a fence-rail for hours to study a book; who would lie on his stomach at night in front of the fireplace and, having no paper or slate, would write and cipher with charcoal on the wooden shovel, on boards and the hewn sides of logs, shaving them clean when he wanted to write again.

Here is his cousin's picture of him at the age of fourteen:

"When Abe and I returned to the house

from work he would go to the cupboard, snatch a piece of corn bread, sit down, take a book, cock his legs up as high as his head, and read. We grubbed, plowed, mowed and worked together barefooted in the field. Whenever Abe had a chance in the field while at work, or at the house, he would stop and read."

His principal books were an arithmetic, the Bible, "Æsop's Fables," "Robinson Crusoe," Weems' "Life of Washington," "The Pilgrim's Progress," and a history of the United States. He became the best speller and penman in his neighborhood. Yet there was a vein of waggery in him which occasionally found a vent in such written verse as this:

Abraham Lincoln,
His hand and pen,
He will be good,
But God knows when.

All this has been told of him many times and in many ways; yet the nation he saved

loves to dwell on the picture of the tall, tanned, awkward woodchopper and farm drudge; gawky, angular, iron-muscled, with bare feet or moccasins, deerhide breeches and coonskin cap, battling out in the forest against his own ignorance and, by sheer force of will power, conquering knowledge and commanding destiny.

Not a whimper against fate, not a word against youths more successful than himself, no complaint of the hard work and coarse food—simply the strivings of a soul not yet conscious of its own greatness, but already superior to its squalid environments.

It is probable that there is not a youth in all America to-day, however poor, ignorant, and forlorn, that has not a better chance to rise in life than Abraham Lincoln had when he started to climb the ladder of light by courage and persistent application.

He attended spelling matches, log-rollings and horse races. He wrote vulgar and sometimes silly verse. He outraged the

farmers who employed him by delivering comic addresses and buffoonery in the form of sermons from tree-stumps, to the snickering field hands. Sometimes he thrashed a bully. His strength was tremendous. No man in the country could withstand him. It is said that he once lifted half a ton. Yet his temper was cool, his heart gentle and generous, and back of his singsongy, rollicking, spraddling youth, with its swinging axe-blows, forest-prowlings, and coarse humor, there was a gravity, dignity, sanity, fairness, generosity and deep, straightout eloquence that made him a power in that small community.

Think of a young man of six feet and four inches in coonskin and deerhide, who could sink an axe deeper into a tree than any pioneer in that heroic region, and who yet had perseverance enough in his cabin home to read "The Revised Statutes of Indiana" until he could almost repeat them by heart!

He became a leader and could gather an audience by merely mounting a stump and

waving his hands. Nor was that all. He frequently stopped brawls and acted as umpire between disputants. Another side of his nature was displayed when he found the neighborhood drunkard freezing by the roadside, carried him in his arms to the tavern and worked over him for hours.

When Lincoln's sister Sarah married Aaron Grigsby in 1826, the seventeen-year-old giant composed a song and sang it at the wedding. Here are the concluding verses:

The woman was not taken
From Adam's feet we see,
So he must not abuse her,
The meaning seems to be.

The woman was not taken
From Adam's head we know,
To show she must not rule him—
'Tis evidently so.

The woman she was taken
From under Adam's arm,
So she must be protected
From injuries and harm.

Yet that dry volume of "The Revised Statutes of Indiana," through which the woodchopper worked so bravely, contained the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and the Ordinance of 1787, and he bound them on his heart like a seal and wore them till the hour of his cruel death.

As time went on Lincoln developed into a popular story-teller and oracle at Jones' grocery store in the nearby village of Gentryville. His oratory grew at the expense of his farm-work. He went to all the trials in the local courts, and trudged fifteen miles to Booneville for the sake of hearing a lawsuit tried. Between times he wrote an essay on the American Government and another on temperance. He made speeches, he gossiped, he argued public questions, he cracked jokes, he made everybody his friend—sometimes he worked. Already he was an American politician, although he did not know it.

It is hard to realize that, even later in his

Taken from an old print

Lincoln debating with Douglas in 1858

career, and with all his mighty strength and courage, the man who preserved "government of the people, for the people, and by the people" to the world could earn only thirty-seven cents a day, and that he had "to split four hundred rails for every yard of brown jeans dyed with white walnut bark that would be necessary to make him a pair of trousers."

When he was President of the United States he told Secretary Seward the story of how he had once taken two men and their trunks to a river steamer in a flatboat built by his own hands, and got a dollar for it.

"In these days it seems like a trifle to me," he added, "but it was a most important incident in my life. I could scarcely credit that I, the poor boy, had earned a dollar in less than a day; that by honest work I had earned a dollar."

In 1828 Mr. Gentry, of Gentryville, loaded a flatboat with produce, put his son in charge of it and hired Lincoln for eight

dollars a month and board to work the bow oars and take it to New Orleans. Near Baton Rouge the young men tied the boat up at night and were asleep in a cabin when they were awakened to find a gang of negroes attempting to plunder the cargo. With a club Lincoln knocked several of the marauders into the river and chased the rest for some distance, returning bloody but victorious. The boat was then hurriedly cut loose, and they floated on all night.

That voyage was Lincoln's first brief glimpse of the great world. Till then he had never seen a large city. In New Orleans he was yet to see human beings bought and sold, and hear the groans that were afterwards answered by the thunders of the Civil War.

IV

TWO years later the milk-sickness which had robbed Lincoln of his mother again visited the Pigeon Creek settlers, and his father decided to move to Illinois, where rich lands were to be had cheap. Dennis Hanks and Levi Hall accompanied the Lincoln family.

The tall young woodchopper had just passed his twenty-first birthday, and it was he, in buckskin breeches and coonskin cap, who goaded on the oxen hitched to the clumsy wagon that creaked and lurched through the March mud and partly frozen streams on that terrible two weeks' journey into the Sangamon country of Illinois.

He said good-bye to the old log-cabin. It was rude and mean, but, after all, it was his home. He shook hands with his friends in

Gentryville. He took a last look at the unmarked grave of his mother. His boyhood was over.

Before setting out for his new home, Lincoln spent all his money, more than thirty dollars, in buying petty merchandise, knives, forks, needles, pins, buttons, thread and other things that might appeal to housewives. And on the voyage to Illinois the future President of the United States peddled his little wares so successfully that he doubled his money. Thus Abraham Lincoln entered the State which saw him rise to greatness—woodchopper, ox-driver, peddler, pioneer.

Even in that rough, heroic pilgrimage, the tender heart of the man showed itself again and again. One loves to remember Lincoln as Mr. Herndon, his law-partner, has described him, pulling off his shoes and stockings and wading a stream through broken ice to save a pet dog left whining on the other side.

"I could not bear to abandon even a dog," he explained.

Presently the emigrants settled on a bluff overlooking the Sangamon River, five miles from Decatur, in Macon County. All promptly set to work. A clearing was made, trees felled, and a cabin built. Abraham and his cousin, John Hanks, ploughed fifteen acres of sod and split rails enough to fence the space in.

Some of the rails split by Lincoln at that time were thirty years later carried into the convention which nominated him for President.

Having reached his majority and seen his father and family safely housed, Lincoln started out to shift for himself. Among other things, he split three thousand rails for a Major Warnick, walking three miles a day to his work.

Then came the winter of "the deep snow," a season so terrible that John Hay has thus described its effects:

"Geese and chickens were caught by the feet and wings and frozen to the wet ground. A drove of a thousand hogs, which were being driven to St. Louis, rushed together for warmth, and became piled in a great heap. Those inside smothered and those outside froze, and the ghastly pyramid remained there on the prairie for weeks; the drovers barely escaped with their lives. Men killed their horses, disemboweled them, and crept into the cavities of their bodies to escape the murderous wind."

Lincoln left his father's house empty-handed, save for his axe, and he had to face that blizzard winter as best he could. No man or woman ever heard him complain. In all his after years he looked back upon the struggles of his early career without a word of self-pity. Those were iron days, but they were not without romance, and life was honest and strengthening.

It is doubtful, after all, whether Lincoln's son, who became rich, dined with kings and

queens, and came to be president of the hundred-million-dollar Pullman Company, ever in his comfortable and successful career once felt half the sense of life in its deepest, grandest moods that thrilled his gaunt father facing that fearful winter.

Let the discouraged American, whose heart grows faint in the presence of "bad luck," think of that rude frontiersman, to whom hardship brought only strength and renewed courage. In spite of everything, the sources of a man's success are within him, and none can stay him but himself. Lincoln knew famine, and cold, and wandering. But he did not pity himself. Axe in hand, he confronted his fate in that smitten country with as great a soul as when he faced the armed Confederacy and saw his country riven and bleeding.

In the spring of 1831 Denton Offut hired Lincoln to go with him on a boat, with a load of stock and provisions, to New Orleans, and, after many adventures, in which

his strength and ingenuity saved boat and cargo several times, he again found himself at the mouth of the Mississippi.

Here he first saw the hideous side of slavery. His law-partner thus refers to one of the scenes he witnessed:

"A vigorous and comely mulatto girl was being sold. She underwent a thorough examination at the hands of the bidders; they pinched her flesh and made her trot up and down the room like a horse. . . . Bidding his companions follow him, he said, 'By God, boys, let's get away from this. If ever I get a chance to hit that thing I'll hit it hard.'"

The grandest and bloodiest page of modern history is a record of how Lincoln fulfilled that promise.

That very summer he went to the village of New Salem, on the Sangamon River—a village that has long since vanished—and became clerk in a log-house general store opened by Offut, who was a restless com-

mercial adventurer. Lincoln and an assistant slept in the store.

Here the tall clerk became famous for his stories and homely wit. His immense stature, his strength, his humor and his penetrating logic attracted attention at once. He talked in quaint, waggish parables, but he never failed to reach the heart or brain.

Offut's store grew to be the common meeting place of the frontiersmen, and long-legged, droll, kindly Lincoln developed his natural genius for story-telling and argument.

But Offut bragged of his clerk's strength. That angered the rough, rollicking youths of a nearby settlement known as Clary's Grove, who picked out Jack Armstrong, their leader and a veritable giant, to "throw" Lincoln. At first Lincoln declined the challenge on the ground that he did not like "wooling and pulling." But, although his inheritance of Quaker blood inclined him to avoid violence, he was finally taunted into the struggle. In

the presence of all New Salem and Clary's Grove he partly stripped his two hundred and fourteen pounds of muscle-ribbed body and conquered the bully of Sangamon County.

After that exhibition of strength and pluck, Lincoln was the hero of the community. Braggarts became silent in his presence. A ruffian swore one day in the store before a woman. Lincoln bade him stop, but he continued his abuse. "Well, if you must be whipped," said the clerk, "I suppose I might as well whip you as any man." And he did it. That was Lincoln.

His honesty became a proverb. It is said that, having overcharged a customer six cents, he walked three miles in the dark, after the store was closed, to give back the money. By mistake he sold four ounces of tea for a half-pound, and the next day trudged to the customer's cabin with the rest of the tea.

Just when Lincoln became a conscious

politician no man can say. His endless anecdotes and jokes, his winning honesty and good nature, his readiness to accept or stop a fight, his willingness to do a good turn for man, woman or child, and his open scorn for meanness, cruelty or deceit, were the simple overflowings of his natural character. He was coarse in his speech and manners. But behind the joking and buffoonery, the primitive man in him was true, gentle, chivalrous. His tender-heartedness was real. His kindliness was not merely the result of a desire to catch friends.

He once illustrated himself by quoting an old man at an Indiana church meeting: "When I do good I feel good, when I do bad I feel bad, and that's my religion."

But in New Salem it soon became evident that Lincoln was not satisfied to remain a clerk in a general store, and that the strivings of leadership were in him. He borrowed books. He asked Menton Graham, the schoolmaster, for advice. He

read, read, read. He walked many miles at night to speak in debating clubs. He trudged twelve miles to get Kirkham's Grammar, and often asked his assistant in the store to keep watch with the book while he said the lesson. It was a common thing to find him stretched out on the counter, head on a roll of calicos, grammar in hand. His desire to master language became a passion. The whole village "took notice." Even the cooper would keep a fire of shavings going at night that Lincoln might read.

The young frontiersman of six-feet-four, who could outlift, outwrestle and outrun any man in Sagamon County, rising from an almost hopeless abyss of ignorance and poverty, was, by his own resolute efforts, acquiring the power that made him the hero of civilization and the savior of a race.

How many of the almost seventeen million children who receive free education in the public schools in the United States, and who assemble once a year to repeat the im-

From "Abraham Lincoln." Copyright, 1892, D. Appleton & Co.

The Globe Tavern, Springfield, where Lincoln lived

perishable sayings of Lincoln, realize how he had to strain and struggle for the knowledge which is offered daily to them as a gift?

No wonder that Lincoln became popular in New Salem, and that when the little Black Hawk Indian war broke out he was elected captain of the company which marched forth from the village in April, 1831, in buckskin breeches and coon caps, with rifles, powder horns and blankets.

It was in that picturesque campaign that Lincoln, coming with his company to a fence gate and not remembering the military word of command necessary to get his company in order through such a narrow space, instantly showed his ingenuity by shouting, "This company is dismissed for two minutes, when it will fall in again on the other side of the gate."

A poor, old half-starved Indian crept into Lincoln's camp for shelter. The excited soldiers insisted on killing him. But Lincoln stood between them and the frightened

fugitive. At the risk of his own life he saved the Indian. The soul of chivalry was in him.

He had no chance to fight, and he was compelled to wear a wooden sword for two weeks because his company got drunk—he who afterwards commanded Grant, Sherman and Sheridan—yet he returned to his village a hero without having shed blood, for the world honors courage and patience even in those who fail to reach the firing line.

V

AFTER the war of 1812, which was fought while Lincoln was in his rude Kentucky cradle, the continental spirit of the American people gradually rose to a high pitch, which was intensified in 1823, when the Monroe Doctrine was born and the Holy Alliance —not to say all Europe—was warned against armed interference with even the humblest republic of the Western Hemisphere.

A new sense of power inspired swaggering, bragging American politics. So the Greeks bragged when Alexander overthrew Persia; so Christendom bragged when Charles Martel smashed the Saracens and made possible the Empire of Charlemagne; so the British bragged after Trafalgar and Waterloo; so the Puritans bragged when Cromwell struck off the head of King Charles.

The boastful spirit of America was encouraged by spread-eagle statesmen in blue coats, brass buttons and buff waistcoats, who spoke as though history began at Bunker Hill. Andrew Jackson, whose frontiersmen had thrashed the trained British regiments at New Orleans, had succeeded John Quincy Adams, the polished Harvard professor, in the White House. It was a time of grand talk. The People—with a capital P—puffed out their unterrified bosoms and made faces at the miserable rulers of Europe. It was brave and honest, this strutting, defiant democracy, but it took Charles Dickens some years later to show us the ridiculous side of it, even though he went too far.

"Do you suppose I am such a d—d fool as to think myself fit for President of the United States? No, sir!" was Jackson's estimate of himself in 1823. Yet there was the rough old hero in Washington's chair at last.

Hayne had talked in the United States Senate of nullifying the nation's laws in South Carolina, and Webster had thundered back his majestic defence of the indivisible Union. Then South Carolina had attempted nullification and threatened secession, to be promptly answered by President Jackson with an effective promise of cold steel and powder, and a gruff hint of the hangman's noose.

Beyond the Allegheny Mountains were the new Western States, with unpaved towns, frantic land booms, tall talk, and hero-hearted men in coonskin caps pushing out with axes and rifles into the unsettled national territories.

In the midst of this half-organized civilization Abraham Lincoln listened to the slowly swelling voices of conflict that came to him in his Illinois village from the Eastern and Southern States.

The great scattered West longed for means of transportation. Railroads, canals,

steamboats! They meant wealth and power to the pioneers and the shrieking speculators. The Whigs under Henry Clay promised to raise such a national revenue through a high protective tariff that a mighty surplus of money could be divided among the States to carry on internal improvements.

Lincoln was a Whig. He was for a high tariff and internal improvements. Had he not personally piloted a steamboat from Cincinnati between the crooked and overgrown banks of the Sangamon River, and had not the imagination of that country taken fire as the vessel reached Springfield? Railroads, canals, steamboats! And no recognition yet of the issue of disunion that was to shake the continent and drench it with blood.

After the return from the Black Hawk war Lincoln offered himself as a candidate for the Legislature. His handbill, addressed to the voters, dealt mainly with river navigation, railroads and usury.

"I was born and have ever remained in the most humble walks of life," he wrote. "I have no wealthy or popular relatives or friends to recommend me."

Lincoln knew that public. He made his first speech in "a mixed jeans coat, claw-hammer style, short in the sleeves and bob-tail; flax and tow-linen pantaloons, and a straw hat." First, he jumped from the platform, caught a fighting rowdy by the neck and trousers, hurled him twelve feet away, remounted the platform, threw down his hat, and made his historic entrance into American politics in these words:

"Fellow citizens: I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by many friends to become a candidate for the Legislature. My politics are short and sweet, like the old woman's dance. I am in favor of a national bank. I am in favor of the internal improvement system and a high protective tariff. These are my sentiments

and political principles. If elected I shall be thankful; if not, it will be all the same."

There is the Lincoln we love—simple, genuine, direct! He seemed to feel to the day of his death that the public was not some distant abstraction, to be approached fearfully and crawlingly; but men like himself, with the same feelings and aspirations. It was because Lincoln hated shams and sneaks, and had the root of kindly honor in his nature, and because he saw, at the very bottom, all men more or less the same, that he reached the average American heart as no one has reached it before or since. He was humble enough—and humility is an inevitable result of moral and spiritual intelligence—to believe that the honesty he felt in himself stirred an equal honesty in others about him.

He was defeated in the election, but that was the only time the people rejected him.

Failure did not sour Lincoln. He took odd jobs about the village—Offutt's had

"petered out"—and for a time he considered the blacksmith's trade. But presently he became a partner in a general store with an idle fellow named Berry, giving his note in payment of his share. He and his partner bought out still another unsuccessful store, paying for it with their notes. The end of it all was that their business failed and Lincoln had to shoulder a debt that made him stagger for many years.

He was not a good merchant. His fondness for study made him neglect his store. Having secured copies of Blackstone and Chitty he spent his days and nights studying law. He would go to the great oak just outside of the door, lie on his back with his feet against the tree, and lose himself in Blackstone for hours.

The store was a failure, and Lincoln went back to rail splitting and farm work. But his law books were always with him. No hardship, no disappointment, could persuade him to give up his pursuit of knowledge.

In 1833 he became postmaster of New Salem, often carrying the scanty mail about in his hat and reading the newspapers before he delivered them.

Meanwhile John Calhoun, the Surveyor of Sangamon County, wanted an assistant, and he appointed the tall, story-telling, likeable postmaster to the place. Lincoln knew nothing of surveying, but in six weeks he got enough out of books to fit him for the work. His survey maps are still models of accuracy and intelligence.

Once more he was a candidate for the Legislature, in 1834. This time he was elected. He had to borrow money to buy clothes in which to make his legislative appearance.

VI

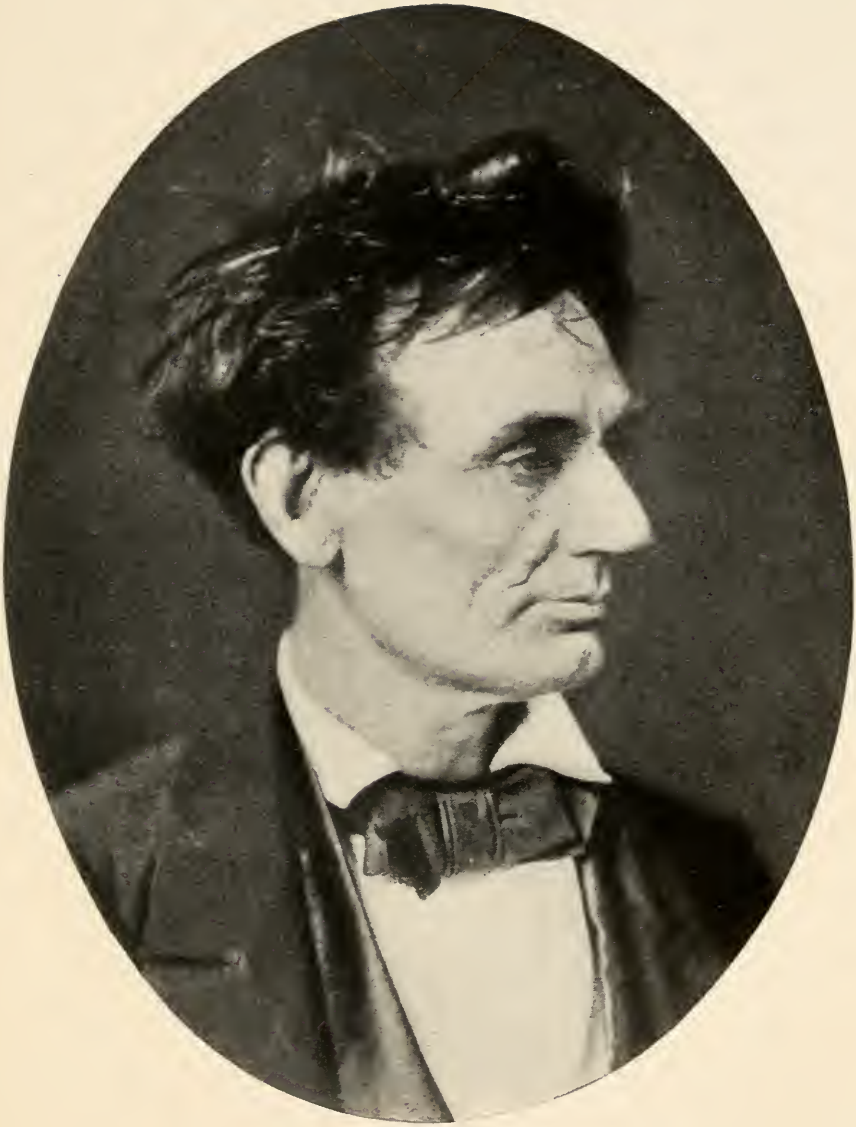
AND now came the first great romance of Lincoln's life. He fell in love with pretty, auburn-haired Anne Rutledge, daughter of the owner of the tavern in which he lived. His passion seemed hopeless, for the slender maid of seventeen was pledged to a young man from New York. Yet Lincoln loved and waited and hoped. His studies had worn him to emaciation. His ill-fitting clothes hung loose on his ungainly figure. His face was thin and his eyes sunken. He was poor, and a mere clodhopper. Still he loved sweet little Anne Rutledge, even though all the village knew she was another's, and that love burned in him always.

When her lover went away, promising to return, Lincoln was her watchful knight, serving and hoping. But the New Yorker did not come back. Anne Rutledge grew

pale with waiting. It was evident that she was deserted. All New Salem knew it.

Then Lincoln offered her his heart and she consented, asking only time enough to write to her lost lover. No answer to the letter came. Week after week passed. And then Lincoln was accepted. But, alas, the strain had been too great, and the abandoned young beauty grew mortally ill. On her deathbed she called for Lincoln continually, and when he came they left him alone with her for farewell. Afterwards he went to her grave and wept like a child. "My heart lies buried there," he said.

Poor, honest, ugly Lincoln! That tragedy saddened his life, and years afterwards he could not refer to Anne Rutledge without tears. So terrible was the effect of her death upon him that for a time his friends feared for his reason. He would wander in the woods a victim to despair. To a companion who urged him to forget his loss he groaned, "I cannot; the thought of the snow



Lincoln in 1857

and rain on her grave fills me with indescribable grief." Finally, he was taken to a friend's house and there watched and comforted through days of deep torment, bordering on madness, till he could bear to go out again among men.

Lincoln went to the Legislature at Vandalia in a coarse suit of jeans, but most of the Illinois lawmakers wore jeans and coonskin caps. It cannot be honestly said that he was a brilliant or important lawmaker, although his great height, immense strength, quaint, sharp wit and never-failing stories made him a popular figure at the State capital.

His mind was too much occupied with the study of the law. He had resumed an acquaintance, formed during the Black Hawk war, with Major John T. Stuart, who encouraged him to become a lawyer, and loaned him books. Curiously enough he seemed to desire no teacher, but followed his course of studies alone. Self-reliance

was his strongest trait, self-reliance and endless work.

Those who attempt to account for Lincoln's remarkable rise in life are apt to overlook the terrific mental grind to which he subjected himself for so many years; and, as we value most that which we get through stress and sacrifice and pain, so the things which Lincoln dug out of his books were never forgotten.

Perhaps, in these easy days, when education is pressed upon all, there is a lesson to be found in the story of this man who laid firm foundations for his after life of greatness by taking upon himself the whole responsibility for searching after sound knowledge and principles.

Lincoln became Major Stuart's law-partner, and for many years he alternated between petty lawsuits and his more profitable work as a surveyor. His sincerity, shrewd humor, fairness and hearty hand-shaking qualities drew friends to him wherever he

went. His long, almost ludicrous figure, with its trousers short of the shoetops by several inches; his stooping shoulders and shriveled, sunken, melancholy face, were not associated with the distinction, romance and tragic dignity which history has given to all that belongs to him. But his very spraddling awkwardness, the picturesque vernacular in which he told his countryside parables, coarse and satirical though they sometimes were; the humble spirit in which the lawyer-surveyor-politician would do odd jobs or chores to help a neighbor or earn a dollar, gave him added political strength with a frontier people who loved plain men.

He does not understand Lincoln who thinks of him as a guileless, innocent frontiersman, raised by accident from a log-cabin to direct a mighty war and shape the policy of a nation. He was a sagacious, observant, natural politician, ambitious but honest. His law-partner, Mr. Herndon, has made that plain. Horace White, who knew

Lincoln in his days of political campaigning, has written of him:

"He was as ambitious of earthly honors as any man of his time. Furthermore, he was an adept at log-rolling or any political game that did not involve falsity. . . . Nobody knew better how to turn things to advantage politically, and nobody was readier to take such advantage, provided it did not involve dishonorable means. He could not cheat the people out of their votes any more than out of their money. The Abraham Lincoln that some people have pictured to themselves, sitting in his dingy law office, working over his cases till the voice of duty roused him, never existed. If this had been his type he never would have been called at all."

It helps one to realize the man who afterwards roused the soul of the Republic to resist the degradation of slavery and the shock of war to read what he wrote from Washington to Mr. Herndon in 1848:

"Now, as to the young men, you must not wait to be brought forward by the older men. For instance, do you suppose that I should ever have got into notice if I had waited to be hunted up and pushed forward by older men? You young men get together and form a Rough and Ready club, and have regular meetings and speeches. Take in everybody that you can get. . . As you go along, gather up the shrewd, wild boys about town, whether just of age or just a little under. Let every one play the part he can play best—some speak, some sing, and all halloo."

And in 1836 we catch sight of Lincoln, again a candidate for the Legislature, leaping forward, with flashing eyes to answer a taunt of a Mr. Forquer, who had a lightning rod on his new house, and had just left the Whig party for a place in the Land Office: "I desire to live, and I desire place and distinction; but I would rather die now than, like the gentleman, live to see the day that

I would change my politics for an office worth three thousand dollars a year, and then feel compelled to erect a lightning rod to protect a guilty conscience from an offended God."

Yes, Lincoln was a politician who could seize your attention by the very witchery of his grotesque personality, twist his opponent into helplessness by the stinging shrewdness of a humorous story, make you laugh or cry alternately, reach down into your humanity by some frank confession of his poverty and rough beginnings, and then suddenly stir the highest instincts of your nature by a sublime moral appeal.

It is true that in his second term in the Legislature he voted for all manner of extravagant and preposterous schemes of "internal improvements." But that was a day of inflated hope, and Illinois was delirious with land gambling. Lincoln, like the other politicians of the State, was swept along by the current of popular enthusiasm.

He swaggered, dreamed, bragged and voted with the rest. The voters wanted railways, canals and river improvements. So the Legislature authorized thirteen hundred miles of railways, a canal between the Illinois River and Lake Michigan, and endless improvements of rivers and streams; and to carry out this staggering programme of improvements in a poor, half-settled frontier State, a loan of twelve million dollars was voted.

Not only did Lincoln in his early life vote for this audacious and spendthrift scheme, in response to a harebrained popular demand, but he advocated woman suffrage; proposed a usury rate, with the naive suggestion that "in cases of extreme necessity there could always be found means to cheat the law"; wrote foolish love letters to blue-eyed Mary Owens, offering to keep his supposed marriage engagement to her, but advising her for her own sake not to hold him to it; and developed into a more or less

ranting, downright country politician, ready to make a stump speech, tell a story, shake hands with a crowd or thrash a ruffian on the slightest provocation.

And when the capital of Illinois was changed to Springfield, he rode into that town on a borrowed horse, with "two saddle-bags, containing two or three law books and a few pieces of clothing," and, not having seventeen dollars with which to buy a bed and furnishings, accepted a free room over the store of his friend, Mr. Speed, dropped his saddlebags on the floor and smilingly said, "Well, Speed, I'm moved." That was his entrance into the town which saw his rise to the Presidency.

Around the fireplace in Speed's store Lincoln used to sit with Douglas, Baker, Calhoun, Browning, Lamborn and other rising politicians and orators of the West. Here every question under heaven was debated, stories were told, jokes cracked, poems recited; and it would take the pen of a Balzac

to describe the scenes of merriment, or serious, sharp contest, that happened before those blazing logs, with an attentive ring of friends listening to the never-ceasing flow of wit and wisdom.

Again and again Lincoln was elected to the Illinois Legislature, always as a Whig. Yet he remained humble in spirit. In answer to the taunt that the Whigs were aristocrats, he made a speech showing that he understood how the political sympathies of the West were to be won:

"I was a poor boy, hired on a flatboat at eight dollars a month, and had only one pair of breeches to my back, and they were buckskin. Now, if you know the nature of buckskin when wet, and dried by the sun, it will shrink; and my breeches kept shrinking until they left several inches of my legs bare between the tops of my socks and the lower part of my breeches; and whilst I was growing taller, they were becoming shorter, and so much tighter that they left a blue streak

around my legs that can be seen to this day. If you call this aristocracy I plead guilty to the charge."

He could outwrestle, outrun and outtalk any man in his section. He was recognized as the most skillful and hard-headed politician in his State. His courage and shrewdness in ordinary affairs were notable, and his honesty and earnestness, sweetened by a sure sense of humor, lent distinction and dignity to a ridiculous figure and sometimes theatrical manner of address.

Yet there was a strange, gloomy self-distrust in Lincoln which showed itself in his love affairs; an imaginative melancholy that wrung his heart and tortured his mind with baseless, shadowy misgivings. He engaged himself to marry Mary Todd and, doubting his own love, broke the engagement. It has been even charged that he deserted her when she was attired for the wedding. Lincoln described his parting to Mr. Speed:

"When I told Mary I did not love her,"

he said, "she burst into tears and almost springing from her chair and wringing her hands as if in agony, said something about the deceiver being himself deceived. To tell you the truth, Speed, it was too much for me. I found the tears trickling down my own cheeks. I caught her in my arms and kissed her."

So great was Lincoln's agony and depression after this that he was watched by his friends lest he might commit suicide. "I am now the most miserable man living," he wrote to Major Stuart. "If what I feel were distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on earth. Whether I shall ever be better, I cannot tell; I awfully forbode I shall not."

The shadow of threatened insanity passed, and within two years Mary Todd became his wife. It was a singular jest of fate that he should have won her away from Stephen A. Douglas, who was yet to be his rival in

the great anti-slavery struggle that was ended only by millions of armed men.

Poor heart-torn, shrewd, foolish, humble, sublime Lincoln!

Then there was the duel with James Shields. That hot-headed Irishman had challenged Lincoln to fight because the tall politician had written certain anonymous letters for the *Springfield Journal.* Lincoln accepted and named "cavalry broadswords of the largest size." The duelists went to the place appointed by the river, and sat on logs on opposite sides of the field. Here is a description of the scene by an onlooker, from Miss Tarbell's "Life of Abraham Lincoln":

"I watched Lincoln closely while he set on his log awaiting the signal to fight. His face was grave and serious. I could discern nothing suggestive of 'old Abe,' as we knew him. I never knew him to go so long without making a joke, and I began to believe he was getting frightened. But presently

Senator Stephen A. Douglas, Lincoln's great rival

he reached over and picked up one of the swords, which he drew from its scabbard. Then he felt along the edge of the weapon with his thumb, like a barber feels of the edge of his razor, raised himself to his full height, stretched out his long arms and clipped a twig from above his head with the sword. There wasn't another man of us who could have reached anywhere near that twig, and the absurdity of that long-reaching fellow fighting with cavalry sabres with Shields, who could walk under his arm, came pretty near making me howl with laughter. After Lincoln had cut off the twig he returned the sword to the scabbard."

Before the combat could begin, friends arrived in a canoe, Shields was induced to make a concession, and presently Lincoln and his opponent returned to town fast friends.

VII

WE love Lincoln because his life plucks every harp-string in true democracy. Lincoln is the answer to Socialism. He represents individualism, justifying opportunity. Self-government stands vindicated in his name. The thought of him is at once an inspiration and challenge to the poorest and most ignorant boy or man in America.

But we love him most of all because he saved the nation which Washington began, and, in the bloody act of salvation, brought human slavery to an end in the great Republic.

In following Lincoln through his picturesque and gaunt youth and through his service in the Illinois Legislature and in Congress to the point where the inner and outer influences of his life, his soul and its environments, merged into one supreme idea—

the preservation of the Union—we must not forget the things that preceded the final test of his life.

Up to Lincoln's time it had not been determined whether the fathers of the Republic had really produced a nation, or merely a contract or treaty between independent and sovereign States. The system of separated, incoordinate and aloof colonies—a shrewd and stubborn British device for keeping their American subjects weak by disunion—grew into the system of States which formed the Republic.

When the Constitution of the United States was framed, ten of the thirteen States had prohibited the importation of slaves. Georgia and the two Carolinas still permitted the slave trade with Africa. In order not to leave these three States out of the Union, the Constitution permitted the importation of slaves until 1808. But the conscious horror of that concession is to be recognized in the care with which the word

slavery is avoided. To satisfy all the slave-owning States, whose consent was necessary to the adoption of the Constitution, slavery itself, within those States, was recognized and sanctioned by a clause providing that five slaves should equal three free persons as a basis of representation in the national House of Representatives.

So that, whether we like the remembrance or not, it is a fact that the founders of the nation actually did sanction slavery, although there was some righteous talk in the Constitutional Convention over the reluctant compromise.

While this convention, in Philadelphia, was legalizing slavery, the Continental Congress, in New York, passed an ordinance for the government of the "territory of the United States northwest of the river Ohio," providing that slavery should be forever prohibited in that territory.

In 1820 the ocean slave-trade was declared to be piracy, punishable by death.

In that same year Congress, under pressure from the slave owners, adopted the Missouri Compromise, by which Missouri was admitted to the Union as a slave State, with the proviso that slavery should be always forbidden in any other part of the territory north of 36° 30′ north latitude.

New England raged against slavery. Her abolitionists cried out against it night and day. To the assertion of the South that slaves were valuable property, legally acquired and legally held, they answered that slavery was a deep damnation in the sight of God, an unspeakably cruel crime, intolerable among civilized men. They helped slaves to escape from their masters, and did everything in their power to make a farce of the laws under which such fugitives might be returned.

A great gulf opened between the free States and the slave States, a gulf flaming with passion and menace. Could the nation hold together?

There were tremendous scenes in the Senate in 1850, when a compromise was reached. California was to be admitted a free State, slavery was to be abolished in the District of Columbia, and there was to be an effective Fugitive Slave Law. These were the principal points.

Henry Clay, in his seventy-third year, spoke for two days in favor of compromise and peace, picturing the frightful war that must result from a failure to agree. John C. Calhoun, pale, haggard and dying, rose from his sick bed, staggered into the Senate on the arms of friends and, being too weak to speak, sat there while his plea for the rights of the South was read. Then he went back to his bed to die a few days later, groaning, "The South! The poor South! God knows what will become of her." Daniel Webster, too, raised his voice for compromise in one of his noblest orations. William H. Seward and Salmon P. Chase bitterly opposed any compromise on the

basis of the Fugitive Slave Law. So fierce did the debate become that Senator Benton drew a pistol on Senator Foote.

Yet in the end, the compromise was adopted and the Fugitive Slave Law was passed.

Then, in 1854, Stephen A. Douglas, United States Senator from Illinois, introduced a bill providing a government for the immense country now included in Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas, Montana and portions of Wyoming and Colorado—a country larger than all the existing free States. All this region was in the area from which slavery was forever prohibited by the Missouri Compromise. Yet Douglas' bill provided that whenever any part of the territory should be admitted to the Union the question of slavery or free-soil should be decided by its inhabitants. This was the famous "squatter sovereignty" idea, a virtual repeal of the Missouri Compromise.

After a desperate fight in Congress, Doug-

las carried his bill. It was a startling step and a direct bid for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency. By this act Douglas made himself one of the most conspicuous men in the country.

Hell seemed to break loose after President Pierce signed this bill. It became impossible to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law. The anti-slavery agitation in the North broke out with indescribable fury. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was published. The abolitionists were almost insane with anger and indignation. Douglas was denounced as a scoundrel who had sold himself to the slaveholders for the sake of his Presidential ambitions.

Lincoln was a well-supported candidate for the United States Senate in 1854, but he gave up his chance and threw his strength to Lyman Trumbull, a weaker candidate, rather than risk the election of a pro-slavery Senator.

Miss Tarbell gives this picture of Lincoln by his friend, Judge Dickey:

"After a while we went upstairs to bed. There were two beds in our room, and I remember that Lincoln sat up in his night-shirt on the edge of the bed arguing the point with me. At last we went to sleep. Early in the morning I woke up, and there was Lincoln half sitting up in bed. 'Dickey,' he said, 'I tell you this nation cannot exist half slave and half free.' 'Oh, Lincoln,' said I, 'go to sleep.'"

The Territories of Kansas and Nebraska became the center of interest, for whether they would be slave States or free States must depend upon the vote of their inhabitants, and that was a simple question of emigration.

Bands of colonists were sent to Kansas by both the slavery and anti-slavery forces. The work of colonizing the State was organized on a large scale by both sides. The pro-slavery men from Missouri crossed into Kansas in 1854 and elected a pro-slavery delegate to Congress. In 1855 about five

thousand Missourians, armed with pistols and bowie knives, invaded Kansas and carried the elections for the Territorial Legislature. This Legislature enacted the Missouri slavery laws and, in addition, provided the death penalty for inciting slaves to leave their masters or revolt. The Free Soil Kansans thereupon elected a Constitutional Convention, and organized a State government, with a constitution prohibiting slavery.

Thus there were two governments in Kansas, one pro-slavery, the other anti-slavery. Blood began to flow as the hostile governments collided.

In 1856 Preston Brooks, a nephew of Senator Butler, of South Carolina, stole up behind Senator Sumner, who had brilliantly defended the Free Soilers of Kansas, and beat him on the head with a heavy cane till he fell unconscious. The pro-slavery Kansans sacked the town of Lawrence. John Brown and his abolitionist fanatics went from cabin to cabin in Kansas, killing and

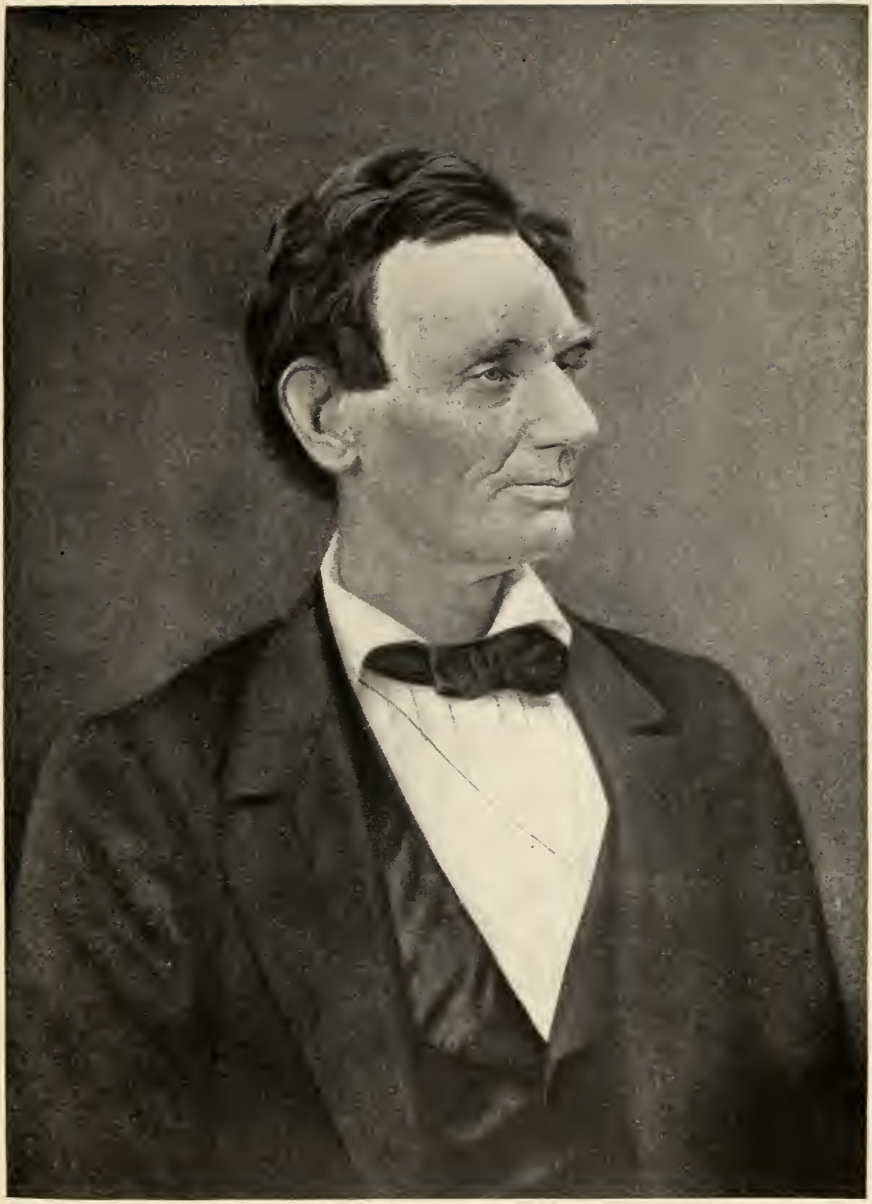
mutilating pro-slavery men. Riots and murders terrorized the State. It was war to the knife between slavery and anti-slavery. And Douglas, in Washington, was pressing his bill declaring that, as soon as Kansas had ninety-three thousand voters, the pro-slavery Territorial Legislature should call a convention and organize the State.

VIII

IT was in 1856 that the conscience and courage of the North found a voice in Abraham Lincoln. In his great soul the civilization of America suddenly flowered.

In Congress Lincoln had vainly opposed the war with Mexico as "unnecessary and unconstitutional," and he had gone back to Springfield to practice law with his new partner, William H. Herndon.

The mighty sweep of events in the country had forced the Whigs and Northern Democrats to form the Free Soil party, not to extinguish slavery, but to prevent its spread from the slave States into the free Territories, and Lincoln's tongue had pleaded powerfully for freedom. But Fremont, the Free Soil candidate for President, was defeated, and the contending slave-



Abraham Lincoln. This photograph was made by Hesler, in Chicago, about 1860

owners and abolitionists continued to press the cup of horror and hatred to the trembling lips of the nation. The South threatened to withdraw from the Union.

Again and again Lincoln had expressed his opinion that slavery was a crime against civilization. In the teeth of Senator Douglas, the eloquent and all-powerful Democratic leader of Illinois, who was arousing the West for slavery, he lashed and trampled upon the attempt to make Kansas a slave State.

While trying to obtain the release of a free-born Illinois negro boy held by the authorities of Louisiana, Lincoln appealed to to the Governor of Illinois, to whom he said, "By God, Governor, I'll make the ground in this country too hot for the foot of a slave, whether you have the legal power to secure the release of this boy or not."

Even then the man who felt in himself the stirrings of power great enough to utter that threat was a grotesque figure among

his fellow-lawyers. Yet there was no shrewder advocate, no more effective jury-pleader and no kindlier heart in Illinois. Mr. Herndon gives this picture of him:

"His hat was brown, faded, and the nap usually worn or rubbed off. He wore a short cloak and sometimes a shawl. His coat and vest hung loosely on his gaunt frame, and his trousers were invariably too short. On the circuit he carried in one hand a faded green umbrella, with 'A Lincoln' in large white cotton or muslin letters sewed on the inside. The knob was gone from the handle, and when closed a piece of cord was usually tied around it in the middle to keep it from flying open. In the other hand he carried a literal carpet bag, in which were stored the few papers to be used in court, and underclothing enough to last until his return to Springfield. He slept in a long, coarse yellow flannel shirt, which reached half way between his knees and ankles."

Lincoln was not a distinguished lawyer. Nor was he a financial success in his profession. His partners complained that he neglected the business side of things and was completely absorbed in the justice or humanity involved in his cases. His heart would melt over the sorrows of a client, and he would either accept a petty fee or altogether neglect to collect anything. Mr. Lamon, his junior partner, has testified that when he charged a fee of $250, Lincoln made him return half the money to their client on the ground that "the service was not worth the sum." So extreme was his generosity and charity, so averse was he to accepting anything but the most modest fees, that Judge David Davis once rebuked him from the bench for impoverishing his brother lawyers by such an example.

Not only that, but Lincoln many times in court showed his deep and unfailing love of justice and fair play by refusing to take advantage of the mere slips of his opponents.

That generous honesty made him a power with judges and juries.

It was when the Republican party was born in the convention at Bloomington, Illinois, on May 29, 1856, that Lincoln displayed the full grandeur of his character. His speech opposing the extension of slavery to Kansas was so stirring, his presence so inspiring, that the reporters forgot to take notes. His hearers were thrilled, swept out of themselves. He seemed to grow taller as he spoke, his eyes flashed, his face shone with passion, he seemed suddenly beautiful, for his soul was in his eyes and on his lips as he declared that slavery was a violation of eternal right.

"We have temporized with it from the necessities of our condition," he said, "but as sure as God reigns and school children read, that black, foul lie can never be consecrated into God's hallowed truth."

McClure's Magazine in 1896 gave a re-

port of this extraordinary speech. Here is an extract:

"Do not mistake that the ballot is stronger than the bullet. Therefore, let the legions of slavery use bullets; but let us wait patiently till November and fire ballots at them in return. . . . We will be loyal to the Constitution and to the 'flag of our Union,' and no matter what our grievance—even though Kansas shall come in as a slave State; and no matter what theirs—even if we shall restore the Compromise—we will say to the Southern disunionists, '*We won't go out of the Union and you shan't!*'"

We love Lincoln because on that day he spoke as one naked in the presence of God. There was no lie in his mouth. Slavery must be kept out of Kansas. Kansas must be free. Slavery was an unspeakable offence in the nostrils of a free people. Yet, since the Constitution and the Missouri Compromise permitted it in the slave States, a law-respecting nation must permit it to

remain there. But Kansas must be free. All the soil as yet uncursed by slavery must be kept free.

And slave or free, the nation must be held together—that was the central note of Lincoln's great speech.

It is a common mistake to suppose that Lincoln was an advocate of the abolition of slavery in the United States. Yet in 1854, while denouncing slavery as a "monstrous injustice," he said:

"When Southern people tell us they are no more responsible for the origin of slavery than we, I acknowledge the fact. When it is said that the institution exists and that it is very difficult to get rid of it in any satisfactory way, I can understand and appreciate the saying. I surely will not blame them for not doing what I should not know how to do myself. If all earthly power were given me, I should not know what to do as to the existing institution."

There was a sincere man, brave enough

and humble enough to make such an admission in the teeth of the terrific abolitionist crusade. So, too, he stood in 1856. The nation had given its word, right or wrong, to the slaveholders, and the nation's word must be kept. But Kansas must be free.

No, tender and merciful as Lincoln was, he did not raise his voice for negro emancipation. That thought came years afterwards, when, in the agony of fratricidal strife, he proclaimed the freedom of the blacks as a war measure.

However, when the Supreme Court of the United States in 1857 decided in the Dred Scott case that a negro could not sue in the national courts, and expressed the opinion that Congress could not prohibit slavery in the territories, there was a fierce outcry in the free States, for five of the Supreme Court justices were from slave States. It is impossible to indicate the pitch of excitement in the country.

Senator Douglas, prompt, bold, master-

ful, faced his constituents in Illinois and stigmatized opposition to the Supreme Court as simple anarchy. Lincoln answered him at once. The people must not resist the court, but it was well known that the court had often overruled its own decisions and "it is not resistance, it is not factious, it is not even disrespectful, to treat it as not having yet quite established a settled doctrine for the country."

Another strain was placed upon the nerves of the overwrought country. By trickery the pro-slavery men of Kansas had brought about the "Lecompton Constitution," permitting slavery in the State. President Buchanan pressed for the admission of Kansas into the Union with this constitution.

So, in 1858, when Lincoln was nominated by the Republicans to succeed Douglas in the Senate, and when he challenged Douglas to a joint debate, the nation was in the throes of an agitation that transcended all other passions in its history.

When the long-legged country lawyer, in loose-hung cloak, faded hat and ill-fitting trousers—sunken-eyed, lantern-jawed and stoop-shouldered—went forth to meet the great Senator before the people, the whole country watched the struggle with intense interest. For, ever since Andrew Jackson overthrew the Virginia oligarchy, the West had grown stronger in the national councils, and it was even now suspected that the balance of political power was passing from the South to the North. And Lincoln, risen from the soil itself, was a singularly bitter challenge to the aristocratic and haughty temper of the slaveowners.

Who can describe that unforgetable and decisive debate in Illinois?

On the very day of his nomination Lincoln uttered the thought that was pressed on and on until slavery and secession were trampled into dust under the heels of the Union armies:

"A house divided against itself cannot

stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other."

Gaunt, gray-eyed, crooked-mouthed Lincoln! In all history no man ever flayed an opponent as he did Douglas.

"I tremble for my country when I remember that God is just," he exclaimed in one of his loftiest moments.

He pelted Douglas with logic, exposed the sham of his "squatter sovereignty" doctrine, and pitilessly analyzed the predatory policy of the slavery forces. He forced Douglas to defend and explain his Kansas-Nebraska law, trapped him into confusing admissions and showed that his popular sovereignty principle meant simply "that if one man chooses to make a slave of another man, neither that other man, nor anybody else, has a right to object."

Against the awkward country lawyer with

shrivelled, melancholy countenance and shrill voice, the polished, handsome and resourceful Douglas contended in vain in the seven monster outdoor meetings of the debates. The humanity of Lincoln, the fairness of his statements, the moral height from which he spoke, the homely, cutting anecdotes, the originality and imagination, the obvious simplicity and sincerity of his arguments beat down Douglas' lawyer-like pleas.

Douglas charged Lincoln with favoring the political and social equality of the white and black races. Lincoln denied that he considered the negro the equal of the white man. "But in the right to eat the bread which his own hands earns," he added, "he is my equal, and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man."

Nothing in the whole story of the American people approaches this struggle between Lincoln and Douglas for dramatic setting and popular enthusiasm; and nothing in Lincoln's life proved more clearly that with

his feet set upon a moral issue he was matchless. He was filled with the majesty of his cause.

"If slavery is right," he said that winter in Cooper Institute, New York, "all words, acts, laws and constitutions against it are themselves wrong, and should be silenced and swept away. If it is right, we cannot justly object to its nationality, its universality. If it is wrong, they cannot justly insist upon its extension, its enlargement. All they ask we could readily grant, if we thought slavery right; all we ask they could as readily grant, if they thought it wrong. Their thinking it right and our thinking it wrong is the precise facts upon which depends the whole controversy."

In the race for the Senatorship Douglas defeated Lincoln; but in that defeat Lincoln won a great victory in the awakened conscience and courage of the North.

We who love him now can hardly understand how deep was the love and how great

An unpublished photograph of Lincoln in 1860, framed in walnut rails split by him in his woodchopper days. Owned by Charles W. McClellan of New York

the confidence that, a year later, raised the cabin-born, uncouth country lawyer and politician to be President of the United States.

We remember his strength and faith in the great war; we remember his gentle patience, his justice and mercy, and his martyrdom; but do we fully realize the effort he made to save his people from the ghastly sacrifice made on the battlefields where the nation was reborn?

IX

HOW still Lincoln became after his nomination for President in 1860! A note of acceptance, just twenty-three lines long, and then unbroken silence till the end of the campaign.

He had thundered throughout the country against the Christless creed of slavery until men forgot his crude manners, preposterous figure and shrill, piping voice in admiration and reverence of his noble qualities.

Now the crooked mouth was set hard. He retired to his modest home in Springfield, Illinois. Nor could threats or persuasions induce him to address a word to the public during that terrific campaign which was the prelude to the horrors of civil war.

In the upward reachings of Lincoln's life there was a singular mysticism that sometimes startles one who contemplates the imperishable grandeur of his place in history.

He saw omens in dreams; experimented with the ghostly world of spiritualism; half-surrendered to madness, when his personal affections were attacked; predicted a violent death for himself; dreamed of his own assassination, and discussed the matter seriously; and gave evidence many times of a strange, aberrant emotional exaltation, alternated with brooding sadness or hilarious, uncontrollable merriment.

But behind these mere eccentricities were sanity, conscience, strength and far-seeing penetrativeness.

In the midst of his heroic debate on slavery with Douglas in 1858, while the whole nation watched the exciting struggle, he showed his statesmanlike appreciation of the situation when he said: "I am after larger game; the battle of 1860 is worth a hundred of this."

And when he was nominated in the roaring Chicago Convention, where the foremost politicians of the East actually shed tears over the defeat of William H. Seward,

he let his party do the shouting, promising, denouncing and hurrahing, while he—wiser, cooler, abler than all—stood squarely on his record and his party's platform, without apology, explanation or mitigation.

To his mind the issue was simple. It could not be misunderstood. Slavery was immoral. It must be confined to the slave States, where it had a constitutional sanction, but uncompromisingly kept out of the free territories.

Yet the country rang with threats that the slave States would break up the Union if Lincoln was elected. He had declared that the nation could not endure half slave and half free. That, they insisted, was a declaration of war against the slave States.

Lincoln drew the short gray shawl about his stooped shoulders, and his face grew more sorrowful. But he said nothing.

Not many months before he had written a letter to a Jefferson birthday festival in Boston, in which he flung the name of Jefferson

against the Democrats as Douglas hurled the heart of Bruce into the ranks of the heathen:

"The Democracy of to-day holds the *liberty* of one man to be absolutely nothing when in conflict with another man's right of *property*.

Republicans, on the contrary, are for both the man and the dollar; but in cases of conflict, the man *before* the dollar.

I remember being once amused much at seeing two partially intoxicated men engage in a fight with their great coats on, which fight, after a long and rather harmless contest, ended in each having fought himself out of his own coat and into that of the other. If the two leading parties of this day are really identical with the two in the days of Jefferson and Adams, they have performed the same feat as the two drunken men. . . .

The principles of Jefferson are the definitions and axioms of free society, and yet

they are denied and evaded, with no small show of success. One dashingly calls them 'glittering generalities.' Another bluntly calls them 'self-evident lies.' And others insidiously argue that they apply to 'superior races.' . . .

This is a world of compensation; and he who would be no slave must consent to have no slave. Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and, under a just God, cannot long retain it. All honor to Jefferson—to the man who, in the concrete pressure of a struggle for national independence by a single people, had the coolness, forecast, and the capacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times, and so to embalm it there that to-day and in all coming days it shall be a rebuke and a stumbling-block to the very harbingers of reappearing tyranny and oppression.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN."

After that no man might claim that he had not bared his soul.

Editors, political leaders, personal friends, vainly attempted during the Presidential campaign to draw from him some public expression of opinion, some hint of what was going on in his mind while the national horizon flamed with passion and threats of war were openly made by the slaveholders.

But he knew that it would not pay to say a word that might complicate a question so clear. The American people were sound at heart. If the issue could be confined to the question of whether slavery was morally right or wrong, the common people could be depended upon to vote against spreading it to the free territories.

Lincoln's confidence in the plain people grew with years. In spite of his shrewd experience in politics he was free from cynicism. There was a childlike simplicity in his character, a central purity and earnestness, that enabled him to see under the

broadcloth and ruffles of the East the same elemental humanity he had known under the deerhide, jeans and coonskins of the West.

Up to the hour of his death he gave no evidence of class consciousness. The rich citizen was no better and no worse than the poor citizen. The college professor was no better and no worse than the field hand. At the bottom of each was the original man, with almost divine possibilities of justice, love and compassion in him.

It was this supreme faith in the better natures of men, and their ability to reach sound conclusions on simple moral issues, that persuaded Lincoln to remain mute throughout the struggle.

How many political leaders are there in the United States to-day who disclose their minds and hearts so unreservedly to the people that they could dare to stand for office with closed lips, relying solely on their record and on the general public intelligence?

Even in his career as a lawyer Lincoln made fun of himself. His small fees were the jest of his companions. It is probable that he did not earn an average of more than three thousand dollars a year, notwithstanding his eloquence and logic. When he went to the White House, all his possessions, including his residence, were worth only about seven thousand dollars.

So he laughed at and made light of his personal appearance. The change from deerhide breeches and coonskin cap to black cloth and a high silk hat simply emphasized the clumsy enormity of his figure. His skin was yellow and his face seamed and puckered. The gray eyes looked out of hollow sockets. The high cheek-bones protruded sharply above sunken cheeks. The mouth was awry and the neck long, lean and scraggy. His immensely long arms swung loosely from stooped shoulders, his trousers were always "hitched up too high," and his ill-kept hat was set at a grotesque tilt from

his lugubrious countenance. His great height, the lank, swinging slouchiness of his immense frame, his somber, saggy clothing and sorrowful expression, added to unconventional manners, made him a target for his political opponents.

"Old ape," "ignorant baboon"—these were the favorite flings of the Southern Democrats. He was pictured as a raw, coarse, brutal and reckless "nigger lover," filled with hatred of the slave States, eager to rob them of their legitimate property, a half-horse-half-alligator, unfit to enter a polite house or associate with gentlemen, and almost insane with the murderous fanaticism of the New England abolitionists.

If Lincoln felt the sting of this cruel satire he gave no sign of it. So humble was his nature that, after his election, he grew a beard at the suggestion of a little girl, who wrote to say that it might make him look better. He wrote this during the Presidential campaign:

"If any personal description of me is thought desirable, it may be said, I am, in height, six feet, four inches, nearly; lean in flesh, weighing on an average, one hundred and eighty pounds; dark complexion, with coarse black hair and gray eyes—No other marks or brands recollected. A. LINCOLN."

He was silent in the face of pitiless abuse and carricature, yet he sent many confidential letters, advising, encouraging, admonishing the Republican leaders. While his supporters carried fence-rails in processions and shouted hosannahs, he quietly directed matters from his home.

And, although he would sometimes laugh with a pure humor that bubbled up unconsciously from his blameless nature, as the strain of the political campaign increased, the tragic sadness of his countenance deepened, for his keen eyes began to see the awful significance of the eminence to which he was to be lifted.

A year ago the rebellion of John Brown at Harper's Ferry had dramatically revealed the irreconcilable temperaments of North and South. While Virginia enthusiastically hanged the man who tried to create an armed negro revolution, the North tolled her bells, lowered her flags to half-mast and glorified him as a holy martyr.

X

A MONTH before the first vote for President was cast, Governor Gist, of South Carolina, addressed a secret circular to the other slave State governors saying, that if Lincoln were elected, which seemed almost certain, South Carolina would secede from the Union. The whole South was urged to join in this dismemberment of the republic.

The answers of the governors, even before the election had occurred, showed that it was not the intention of the slave States to submit to the rule of the majority, and that, already, armed resistance to the national authority was acceptable as the alternative to "the yoke of a black Republican President."

If any secret voice of this germinating treason reached Lincoln at Springfield he kept it to himself.

But when his victory was assured by a majority that made the combined vote of his opponents seem insignificant, his continued silence in the midst of general rejoicing and boasting showed that he understood the gravity of the situation.

South Carolina withdrew from the Union, seizing custom houses, post offices, arsenals and forts.

President Buchanan, old, weak and cowardly, promised to use no force against the rebels, but to leave everything to Congress. His Secretary of War, Mr. Floyd, of Virginia, was a traitor, secretly helping the slave States to arm against the general government. His Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Cobb, of Georgia, also conspired with the disunionists, and finally resigned to take part in the rebellion. His Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Thompson, of Mississippi, actually acted as a rebel commissioner to spread the doctrine of secession while he was still in the Cabinet. The Assistant

Carpenter's picture, painted under the personal supervision of Lincoln, represents the moment when the President told his cabinet that he would issue the Proclamation of Emancipation in fulfilment of a personal vow to God.

Secretary of State, Mr. Trescott, was another member of the great plot.

Within two months, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas had followed South Carolina out of the Union. Forts, arsenals, post offices and custom houses were captured, the Stars and Stripes lowered, and the rebel flag hoisted.

Before Lincoln could be inaugurated, the seceded States had organized a Confederate government, with Jefferson Davis for President.

With treason in his Cabinet, and armed rebellion openly preached in Congress, the bewildered, rabbit-hearted Buchanan did nothing to defend the national sovereignty. He was no traitor—simply a poltroon, without character, convictions or courage enough to assert the plain powers of his office, and willing to shelter his cringing soul and dishonored responsibilities behind a paramount authority which he pretended to find in Congress.

Imagine Lincoln, sitting in far-away Springfield, helpless to act, while Buchanan permitted a foreign government to be set up within the United States, and promised to use no force aganist the rebels lest war might follow.

Think of the newly-chosen leader of the American people compelled to silence and impotence while the President refused to send relief to loyal Major Anderson and his handful of soldiers besieged in Fort Sumter by rebels whose arms had been furnished by the government they sought to destroy!

The lines in Lincoln's face deepened. His eyes grew more sorrowful. The stooping shoulders stooped still lower. There was that in his look sometimes that compelled mingled awe and pity.

For Lincoln loved his country with the love that a father has for his child, and the pent-up agony that showed in his lean visage as he watched the attempt to break up the great republic might not yet find utterance.

It was useless for him to repeat that he did not hate the South; that he did not favor the political and social equality of negroes and whites; that he was not an abolitionist; that, although he considered slavery wrong and would oppose its extension to Kansas and all other free soil of the United States, he would do nothing to interfere with it in the States where it had Constitutional rights.

Yet he waited patiently and silently, believing that he could persuade the South that he was not an enemy, and in that time of slow anguish his soul turned to God for help.

The careless, foot-free, waggish wood-chopper of New Salem had scoffed at religion, and written a bitter attack on the Bible, which a wiser friend had snatched from his hands and burned. The President-elect with the cares of a mighty nation in its death throes descending upon his shoulders, stretched his hands child-like to a power greater even than the "omnipotent and sovereign people."

Mr. Herndon, his law partner, has given us an unforgetable picture of Lincoln a day before his departure for the White House:

"He crossed to the opposite side of the room and threw himself down on the old office sofa, which, after many years of service, had been moved against the wall for support. He lay for some moments, his face towards the ceiling, without either of us speaking. Presently he inquired, 'Billy' —he always called me by that name—'how long have we been together?' 'Over sixteen years,' I answered. 'We've never had a cross word in all that time, have we?' . . . He gathered a bundle of papers and books he wished to take with him, and started to go; but, before leaving, he made the strange request that the sign-board which swung on its rusty hinges at the foot of the stairway should remain. 'Let it hang there,' he said, with a significant lowering of the voice. 'Give our clients to understand that the election of a President

Springfield, Ills. May 23. 1860

Hon: George Ashmun.

President of the Republican National Convention.

Sir:

I accept the nomination tendered me by the Convention over which you presided, and of which I am formally apprized in the letter of yourself and others, acting as a Committee of the Convention, for that purpose.

The declaration of principles and sentiments, which accompanies your letter, meets my approval; and it shall be my care not to violate, or disregard it, in any part.

Imploring the assistance of Divine Providence, and with due regard to the views and feelings of all who were represented in the Convention; to the rights of all the states, and territories, and people of the nation; to the inviolability of the Constitution, and the perpetual union, harmony, and prosperity of all, I am most happy to co-operate for the practical success of the principles declared by the Convention.

Your obliged friend, and fellow citizen

A. Lincoln

Fac-simile of Lincoln's letter of acceptance

makes no change in the firm of Lincoln & Herndon. If I live, I am coming back some time, and then we'll go right on practising law as if nothing had happened.' He lingered for a moment, as if to take a last look at the old quarters, and then he passed through the door into the narrow hallway."

On the day Lincoln left Springfield to take the oath of office at Washington he stood in a cold rain on the rear end of the train that was to take him away, and addressed a bareheaded crowd. His face worked with emotion. His lips trembled and his voice shook. His eyes sought the faces of his old neighbors with a new sadness.

"To-day I leave you," he said, bending his tall, ugly figure, as if in benediction. "I go to assume a task more difficult than that which devolved upon Washington. Unless the great God who assisted him shall be with me and aid me, I must fail."

Strong men in the crowd wept.

"But if the same omniscient mind and almighty arm that directed and protected him shall guide and support me, I shall not fail—I shall succeed."

The long arms and bony hands were extended. The crooked mouth quivered, the gray eyes were moist, and the tall figure seemed to grow taller.

"Let us all pray that the God of our fathers may not forsake us now."

With that prayer on his lips Lincoln went on his way to Washington through many a cheering multitude that uncovered as the train passed.

He made speeches at Indianapolis, Columbus, Steubenville, Pittsburg, Cleveland, Buffalo, Albany and New York. He begged the American people to be patient. No blood would be shed unless the government was compelled to act in self-defense. There would be no "coercion" or "invasion" of the South, but the United States would re-

take its own forts and other property and collect duties on importations. In Cincinnati Lincoln spoke to the South, which was reviling him and defying the national authority, in terms that prove how eager he was to avert armed conflict:

"We mean to leave you alone, and in no way interfere with your institutions; to abide by all and every compromise of the Constitution; and, in a word, coming back to the original proposition, to treat you, so far as degenerate men—if we have degenerated—may, according to the examples of those noble fathers, Washington, Jefferson and Madison. We mean to remember that you are as good as we are; that there is no difference between us other than the difference of circumstances. We mean to recognize and bear in mind always that you have as good hearts in your bosoms as other people, or as we claim to have, and to treat you accordingly."

It took a great soul in a man of Lincoln's

heroic origin, direct methods, intense patriotism and deep hatred of slavery to speak in such terms to rebellion.

The time came when he hurled a million armed men against the insurgent South, when with a stroke of his pen he set free four millions of slaves, representing a property value of about two and a half billion dollars; and when, with fire and sword and the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of lives and billions on billions of treasure, he proved to the world that democratic institutions were strong enough to resist the mightiest shocks of civil war.

But as he moved on to the scene of his great ordeal in Washington, there was nothing but temperate reason, kindness and peace on his lips.

It must not be forgotten that the tall, gawky, sad-faced lawyer in ill-fitting funereal black, was no limp-limbed product of sedentary sentimentalism, but a man with muscles of steel, who had thrashed and

cowed the most dreaded desperadoes of the frontier, a self-made son of the wilderness, who had battled against floods, famines and wild beasts; and who had in him the stout heart and steady will of the cabin-born and forest-bred. Lincoln was incapable of fear, save the fear of folly or injustice. He was not afraid even of ridicule, that poisoned weapon before which so many strong men tremble.

As the nation prepared to honor the hundredth anniversary of his birth, well might it remember him, newly separated from his provincial and rude, but heroic West, advancing between the haggard passions of a divided country with firm, brotherly hands held out to the whole people.

In Philadelphia he was told by Allan Pinkerton, the detective, that there was a conspiracy to murder him when he reached Baltimore. Unless he agreed to make the rest of the journey secretly he could not reach Washington alive. He was urged not

to expose himself again in public, but to go right on to his destination at once.

With this knowledge of his peril, he assisted in the raising of a new flag over Independence Hall that day, and delivered a noble address, in which he recalled the sentiment in the Declaration of Independence "which gave promise that in due time the weights should be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance."

"Now, my friends," he cried, his shrill voice ringing to the outer edge of the excited multitude, "can this country be saved on that basis? If it can, I will consider myself one of the happiest men in the world if I can help to save it. . . . But if this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle, I was about to say that I would rather be assassinated on this spot. . . . I have said nothing but what I am willing to live by, and, if it be the pleasure of Almighty God, to die by."

Mrs. Abraham Lincoln

WHY WE LOVE LINCOLN

With assassins waiting in Baltimore to save the cause of slavery and disunion by striking down the President-elect, Lincoln, by a secret change of plan, managed to reach Washington in safety.

XI

ALL the way from Springfield Lincoln carried a small handbag containing the manuscript of his inaugural address, upon which it was believed that the issue of peace or war would depend. The whole country waited anxiously to hear what the rail-splitter had to say, now that he had command of the army, navy and treasury.

Would he dare to send troops to the rescue of Major Anderson and his men, besieged in Charleston harbor by rebellious South Carolina?

Would he relieve the loyal garrisons hemmed in by insurgent Florida?

To use force meant instant civil war. To refrain from using force meant the destruction of the Union.

Only three months before, Mr. Holt,

Buchanan's loyal Postmaster General, had written to one of Lincoln's partners:

"I doubt not, from the temper of the public mind, that the Southern States will be allowed to withdraw peacefully; but when the work of dismemberment begins, we shall break up the fragments from month to month, with the nonchalance with which we break the bread upon our breakfast table. . . . We shall soon grow up a race of chieftains who will rival the political bandits of South America and Mexico, who will carve out to us our miserable heritage with their bloody swords. The masses of the people dream not of these things. They suppose the Republic can be destroyed to-day, and that peace will smile over its ruins to-morrow."

Away out in his Illinois home Lincoln had written these words in his inaugural address:

"In *your* hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in *mine*, is the mo-

mentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail *you*. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. *You* have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the government, while *I* shall have the most solemn one to 'preserve, protect and defend it.'"

This was the spirit in which he made that journey from the West, knowing that the question of war or peace hung as upon a hair trigger. Backwoodsman and provincial though he might be, he knew the underlying American character well enough to hope, in his own heart, in spite of the secession of so many States, what was bluntly said to Jefferson Davis and his Cabinet: "Unless you sprinkle blood in the face of the people of Alabama, they will be back in the old Union in less than ten days."

But when Lincoln went through the guarded streets of Washington to the bayonet-girt Capitol, to have the pro-slavery Chief Justice administer the oath of office,

the speech he carried in his pocket had been greatly altered. He had even been persuaded by Mr. Seward, his new Secretary of State, to modify this brave sentence:

"All the power at my disposal will be used to reclaim the public property and places which have fallen; to hold, occupy and possess these, and all other property and places belonging to the government."

They thought he might be murdered before he could take the oath. There was artillery in the streets and ominous swarms of soldiers. Even on the roofs sharpshooters were to be seen.

Grizzled old General Scott had sent this word from his sick bed to the President-elect: "I'll plant cannon at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, and if any of them show their heads or raise a finger I'll blow them to hell."

Yet when Lincoln's long body reared itself before the hushed crowd, and when he laid aside his new ebony, gold-headed cane, set

his iron-bound spectacles on his nose and removed his hat—there was Douglas, his old rival for Mary Todd's hand, his competitor for the Senate and the Presidency, his antagonist in the struggle against slavery; but a new Douglas, loyal to the Union, who was content to reach out his hand in the presence of that high-strung multitude and hold Lincoln's hat.

President Buchanan was there, withered, bent, slow, insignificant, in flowing white cravat and swallowtail coat. Beside him towered the homely rail-splitter—also in an unaccustomed and distressing swallowtail coat and wearing a stubby new beard, grown to please a little girl—who dared at last to give the national authority a voice and to say that "No State, upon its own mere motion, can lawfully get out of the Union," that "resolves and ordinances to that effect are legally void," and that "I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of

the Union be faithfully executed in all the States."

How hard it is for us now to realize the appalling strain of responsibilities that could persuade a valiant frontiersman like Lincoln—knowing that Fort Sumter was already besieged; that the Florida forts were threatened and that an organized Confederate government, with drilled troops, was actually in possession of many States—to say so softly to the armed and defiant South:

"I trust that this will not be regarded as a menace, but only as the declared purpose of the Union that it will constitutionally maintain and defend itself."

Just before he closed his speech Lincoln looked up from his manuscript, and his gray eyes—those eyes that could be so tender as to make his gaunt face beautiful—sought the silent, listening crowd. There were dark circles under his eyes. His whole bearing was that of a man in pain. Then

he raised his splendid head and made that last sublime appeal against war:

"I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

As Lincoln kissed the open Bible in the hands of Chief Justice Taney—who wrote the Dred Scott opinion supporting slavery —the thunder of artillery announced his vow to defend the Union.

XII

THOSE who in peaceful times like these wonder why so strong and direct a man as Lincoln should have been so eager to conciliate the haughty and rebellious Confederacy, to assure the rebels that there would be no "coercion" or "invasion," and to appeal to their historic national consciousness, rather than to tell them in so many words that they would be scourged into obedience, must consider that he at last realized the Southern misunderstanding of his purpose and temperament which caused the Governor of Florida to write to the Governor of South Carolina:

"If there is sufficient manliness at the South to strike for our rights, honor and safety, in God's name let it be done before the inauguration of Lincoln."

Not only that, but Mr. Seward, the great Republican leader of the East, now Secretary of State, and one of the deadliest foes of slavery, within three weeks wrote this advice:

"*Change the question before the public from one upon slavery, or about slavery,* for a question upon *union or disunion.*"

No man knew or loved Lincoln better than Leonard Sweet, who made this deliberate analysis of him:

"In dealing with men he was a trimmer, and such a trimmer the world has never seen. Halifax, who was great in his day as a trimmer, would blush by the side of Lincoln; *yet Lincoln never trimmed in principles,* it was only in his conduct with men."

Besides, Lincoln was incapable of mere hatred. All through the Civil War he showed that his love for the whole American people was tidal. It was his belief in the goodness of human nature and the justice of the Union cause that made him grieve

like a defied and deserted father over the erring Southern insurgents, and to hope, with an intensity that drew prayer from his lips, that the ties of race, continental pride and ccmmon national memory would reunite the nation without the sacrifice and seal of bloodshed.

It was not for love of the negro that he waged war upon slavery, but for the sake of justice and humanity, and to save the nation from increasing degradation and demoralization. True, he had challenged the South when he said, "a house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free." But he had also said:

"There is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together, there must be the position of superior and inferior, and

I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race."

Lincoln's private letters and conversations, from his nomination to his election, prove that there was one point only on which he would permit no compromise—slavery must not be extended to the free territories.

But as President his one supreme duty was to save the Union, to prevent the destruction of the nation. He was yet to write amid the roar of a conflict in which half a million lives were lost, that agonized but unflinching letter to Horace Greely:

"I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be 'the Union as it was.' If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not

St. Gaudens statue, Lincoln Park, Chicago

either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union."

Those who did not recognize the greatness of Lincoln under his simple manners and kindly, humble disposition, assumed that he would be dominated by Mr. Seward, his scholarly and distinguished Secretary of State. The homespun, picturesque orator of Illinois was all very well to catch votes. But Mr. Seward would be the real President.

Mrs. Lincoln heard the talk and mentioned it to her husband.

"I may not rule myself, but certainly Seward shall not," said Lincoln. "The

only ruler I have is my conscience—following God in it—and these men will have to learn that yet."

John Hay, his secretary and bosom friend, who called Lincoln "the greatest character since Christ," wrote to Mr. Herndon: "It is absurd to call him a modest man. No great man was ever modest. It was his intellectual arrogance and unconscious assumption of superiority that men like Chase and Sumner could never forgive."

Still, even though he stood rocklike where his mind and conscience told him that he was right, a humbler, simpler, more unaffected man never walked the earth; and there are libraries of books teeming with tales of his tenderness to women, his love of little children, his compassion for the unfortunate.

The first sign of the strong, sure Lincoln in the White House came when the new President on the day after his inauguration received a dispatch from Major Anderson

declaring that he was short of provisions, that Fort Sumter must be abandoned to the Confederacy in a few weeks, and that it would take at least twenty thousand soldiers to relieve Charleston harbor from the Confederate siege. The whole Federal army numbered only sixteen thousand men.

Washington was filled with clamorous office-seekers who crowded the White House. The President was distracted. Even his carriage was stopped by a greedy applicant, and he was compelled to cry, "I won't open shop in the street."

With the secret news from Fort Sumter stirring his soul—for no one knew better that immediate war depended on his action—Lincoln told stories, cracked jokes and dealt with the thronging politicians in his old shrewd, homely way. None of the place-hunters was permitted to suspect the impending tragedy that made him bow his head when he was alone.

Meanwhile he ordered General Scott to

report what could be done; but the old hero advised him that the abandonment of Sumter was "almost inevitable." He had also ordered troops to be sent to relieve Fort Pickens, in Florida, which was also menaced. General Scott reported that both Pickens and Sumter should be evacuated.

Instantly the President ordered the Navy Department to prepare plans for a relief expedition for Fort Sumter. That night he gave a great state dinner. His humorous stories and quaint sallies of wit kept his guests in high spirits. His lean face was convulsed with laughter, his eyes sparkled and his thin, high voice whipped up the merriment.

But as the night waned and the laughter died down, he called the members of his Cabinet aside and, with haggard face and a voice of deep emotion, he told them the news from General Scott.

That night Lincoln did not close his eyes. The next day, against the advice of five of

his Cabinet, including Mr. Seward, all of whom advised the abandonment of Fort Sumter, he ordered the preparation of a naval expedition to relieve Major Anderson. Additional troops and supplies were ordered into the beleaguered Fort Pickens in Florida.

The Confederate commissioners might seek conferences with Secretary Seward in vain. The expedition to rescue Sumter sailed with orders to deliver food to the garrison and, if opposed, to force its way in. Lincoln's hand had signed the order that precipitated the Civil War.

Although the President had notified Governor Pickens, of South Carolina, that the relief expedition simply contemplated the peaceful delivery of provisions to a garrison threatened by starvation, the Confederates immediately demanded the surrender of Sumter, with a pledge from Major Anderson that he should make no preparations to injure the fort after withdrawing. This de-

mand was refused by Anderson, who added, "if I can only be permitted to leave on the pledge you mention, I shall never, so help me God, leave this fort alive."

Again and again Anderson was called upon to surrender Sumter. The Confederates were determined to have the place before Lincoln's supplies arrived. Each time the brave Union officer replied that he would maintain his country's flag where it flew.

Then came the crash which shook the continent and thrilled the civilized world.

At daybreak on April 12, 1861, in the presence of a great multitude of civilian spectators in Charleston harbor, the rebel batteries opened fire on Fort Sumter and the Union. For two days the fort withstood the terrific bombardment, and then, with all food gone, his quarters set on fire by red hot cannon balls, and his ammunition almost exhausted, Major Anderson lowered the stars and stripes to native-born Americans and hoisted the white flag.

That was on Saturday. On Sunday Lincoln wrote a proclamation calling for seventy-five thousand volunteers to defend the Union.

The same night Douglas called at the White House—Douglas, the Democratic, thundering Douglas, the champion of slavery; Douglas, the antagonist of Lincoln in almost every crisis of his career; Douglas, who in the Senate only a few weeks ago had cried, "War is disunion. War is final, eternal separation"—and Lincoln clasped hands with the brilliant rival from whom he had won his wife and the Presidency, now come to pledge his life to the defence of the Union.

On Monday morning Lincoln's proclamation and Douglas's noble and magnanimous declaration that he would support Lincoln in saving the nation were read by the American people.

To the exultant shout that went up from the armed slave States, there came an answering cry of rage and indignation from

the free States. The whole country trembled with the war spirit. War! war! war! Every city, town and village in the North answered Lincoln's call for troops to crush the rebellion. Farms and factories poured out their men. Streets were gay with bunting and noisy with marching feet. Industry was abandoned in the instant and tremendous preparation for the conflict.

Yet Lincoln's call for seventy-five thousand men was to grow into a call for a half million men and a half billion dollars, and the struggle between the sixteen free States and the seven rebellious slave States, with the border States hesitating between, was to change into a four years' death-grapple between all the States of the South and all the States of the North, a conflict without parallel in its horror and costliness.

Mr. Stoddard, one of Lincoln's private secretaries, thus described Lincoln in the White House at the beginning of the war:

"A remarkably tall and forward-bending

form is coming through the further folding doors, leaving them carelessly open behind him. He is walking slowly, heavily, like a man in a dream. His strongly marked features have a drawn look, there are dark circles under his deep-set eyes, and these seem to be gazing at something far away, or into the future."

That countenance of unutterable sadness, fixed gray eyes that seemed to see something in the vacant air; thin, stooped shoulders, bowed head, hands clasped behind the back, slow, halting step and general air of weariness and melancholy abstraction, was known only to those who saw Lincoln when he wrestled alone with the agony of his burdens.

The greedy crowd that pressed for office, the impatient fanatics who thrust their advice upon him, the haughty statesmen who condescended to meddle with his powers, the tricksters and traders, saw only the simple, resolute, vulgar, kindly Lincoln, full of the old allure of anecdote and jest,

patient, keen and ready in a flash to avoid an immature decision or soften a refusal by a witty epigram or an illuminating joke.

It is an astonishing evidence of Lincoln's complex character that he could laugh and play like a careless boy, and patiently putter over the small details of office-giving, while the iron of his character was annealing in the furnace of war.

No more sensitive or imaginative man than Lincoln ever lived. His amazing sense of humor stayed him in his trial. It was sometimes Titanic.

"Has anything gone wrong at the front?" asked a friend, seeing him downcast.

"No," replied the President with a weary smile. "It isn't the war; it's the post office at Brownsville, Missouri."

The deadly, ceaseless, shameless crowding and intriguing of place-hunters—notwithstanding the shock of war that threatened the nation itself—made a profound impression on Lincoln.

"This human struggle and scramble for office, for a way to live without work, will finally test the strength of our institutions," he said to Mr. Herndon.

That has been the idea of every tormented President of the United States, from Washington to Roosevelt.

"He is an old criminal lawyer," wrote one of his secretaries, "practiced in observing the ways of rascals, accustomed to reading them and circumventing them, but he does not commonly tell any man precisely what he thinks of him."

Even so able a man as Secretary Seward did not at first recognize the force, genius and dignity that lay behind the rough, whimsical exterior of Lincoln, and gave himself the airs of a superior; but presently even Seward said: "He is the best of us all."

While the country was ringing with the sounds of marching men after the fall of Fort Sumter, it was reported that a great

force of Confederates was moving against Washington. There were only four or five thousand troops in the capital. A Massachusetts regiment on the way to Washington had been attacked by a mob. The Seventh Regiment of New York was expected, but the Marylanders had torn up the tracks and it did not come. The city was in danger of famine. The Confederate attack was hourly expected. The capital was cut off.

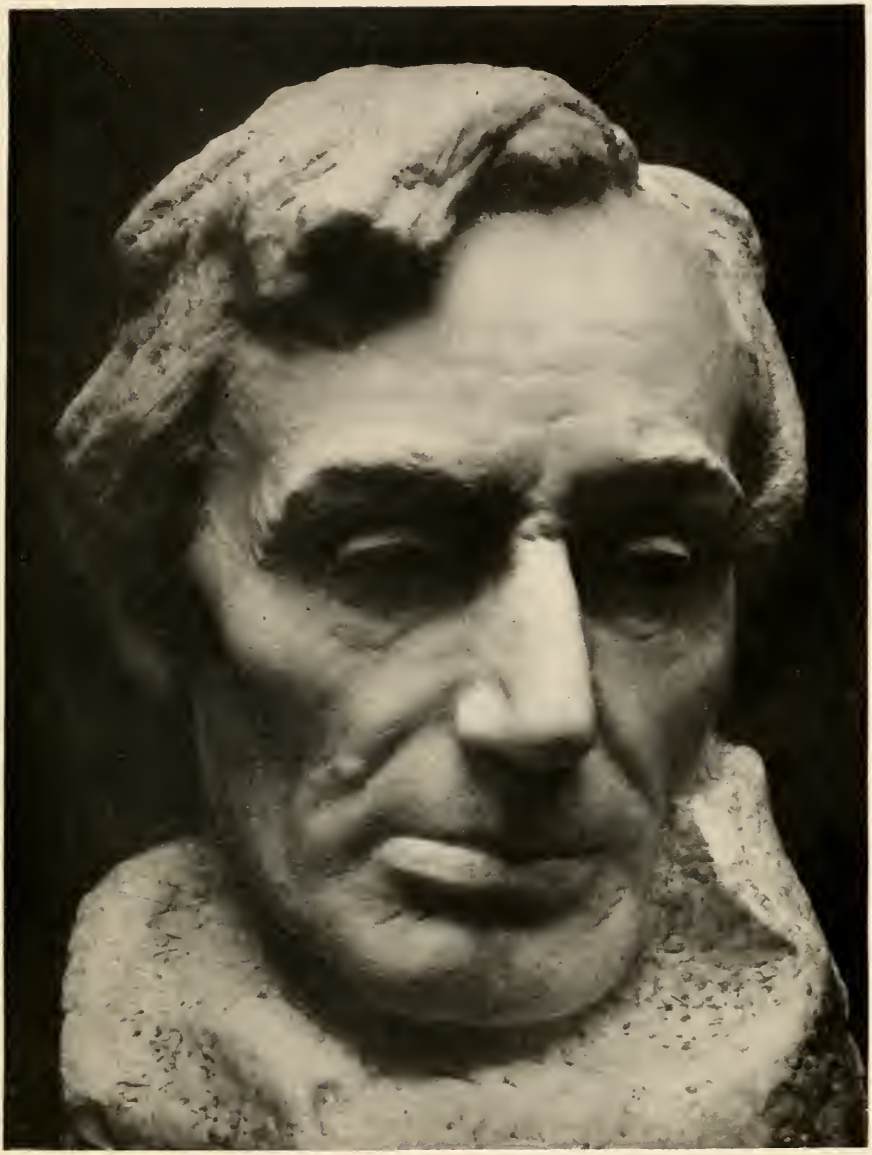
Lincoln's anguish was unconcealed. Walking up and down his office, with a look of pain on his face, he gave vent to his dread.

"I begin to believe that there is no North. The Seventh Regiment is a myth."

Again he paced the floor for half an hour.

"Why don't they come? Why don't they come?" he groaned.

Presently the New Yorkers, who had rebuilt the tracks and bridges from Annapolis on, marched into Washington, and within a



Photograph by Davis and Eikemeyer

This powerful and poetic head of Lincoln, by Gutzon Borglum, which deeply impressed the emancipator's living son, has been presented to Congress by Eugene Meyer, Jr., of New York

week Lincoln had seventeen thousand soldiers in the city.

It was this terror of losing Washington that persuaded Lincoln to withdraw McDowell's forty thousand men from McClellan when his army was within sight of Richmond.

XIII

LINCOLN'S tenderness of heart was one of his striking traits. The story of his life is full of touching incidents showing his pity for all living things in distress. As a boy he protected frogs and turtles from torture; as a frontiersman he returned young birds to their nests, and once rode back on his tracks over the prairie and dismounted to help a pig stuck in the mud; as President his habit of pardoning soldiers condemned to death excited the wrath of his generals. His heart melted at the sight of tears. It was hard for him to withstand a tale of woe. The shedding of blood stirred horror and grief in him.

This extreme sensitiveness would have been an element of almost fatal weakness in the man upon whom events had so suddenly thrust the command of a great war, particularly a war between his own country-

men, but for the fact that reason and devotion to justice were the anchors of his nature.

He could not be moved on a clear question of principle by either friendship, enmity or compassion.

He appointed Edwin M. Stanton as Secretary of War, in place of the discredited Simon Cameron, in spite of the fact that Stanton had treated him contemptuously in a law case on which they were engaged together, and had described him as a "long, lank creature from Illinois, wearing a dirty linen duster for a coat, on the back of which the perspiration had splotched wide stains that resembled a map of the continent."

He raised George B. McClellan to command the army, notwithstanding the circumstance that McClellan, as vice-president of the Illinois Central Railway, had once deeply wounded him by declining to pay his lawyer's bill; and that, in 1858, while the Illinois Central refused Lincoln the most common courtesy, McClellan was accom-

panying his rival, Douglas, in a private car and special train.

It was not chivalry, but patriotism, that inspired Lincoln to put these two Democrats in control of the armed forces of the nation. His own feelings were nothing; the fate of the Union was everything. Stanton had been an honest and masterful member of Buchanan's Cabinet. McClellan had made a glorious answer to the Bull Run defeat by driving the Confederate troops out of West Virginia.

The life of the nation was more important than party lines. Besides, Stanton and McClellan had the confidence of the Democrats, and it was essential, not only that the whole North should be held together, but that the loyal Democrats in the wavering border States should feel that there was no sectional or party prejudice in the government.

Stanton tried to bully Lincoln and called him "the original gorilla," and McClellan

treated him with disdainful indifference. Neither could exhaust his patience. He mastered his lion-headed Secretary of War by gentle persistence. He endured McClellan's months of inactivity after the Army of the Potomac had grown into a fighting force of nearly a hundred and seventy thousand magnificently trained men, and when the government was being openly sneered at for its hesitation to give battle.

Great-hearted, patient Lincoln! He even consented to sit uncomplainingly in the waiting room of McClellan's residence while the arrogant young general talked to others.

"I will hold McClellan's stirrup if he will only bring success," he said.

But, in the end, he wrote the orders which forced McClellan's army against Richmond; and when Frémont, in the West, ignored the President's orders to fight, Lincoln promptly removed him from command.

To the newly assembled Congress he said:

"This is essentially a people's contest. On the side of the Union it is a struggle for maintaining in the world that form and substance of government whose leading object is to elevate the condition of men—to lift artificial weights from all shoulders. . . . It is now for them [the people] to demonstrate to the world that those who can fairly carry an election can also suppress a rebellion; that ballots are the rightful and peaceful successors of bullets; and that when ballots have fairly and constitutionally decided, there can be no successful appeal back to bullets; that there can be no successful appeal except to ballots themselves at succeeding elections."

To one of the many committees that went to the White House to complain that the war was not being pressed rapidly enough, he suggested a question and answer that were repeated all over the country.

He was tired, pale, almost worn out. The ceaseless grind of work, the frightful

and increasing responsibilities imposed by the war, the cruel jibes of critics all over the country, had deepened the furrows in his brow and wasted his homely face. Every mail brought threats of assassination. The far-away, rapt look in his eyes, the pitiful droop of his strong mouth, the pathetic sloping of his tall, black-clad figure, gave evidence of the strain upon him.

"Gentlemen," he said, with a smile that lit up his wonderful face, "suppose all the property you were worth was in gold, and you had put it in the hands of Blondin [the famous tight-rope walker] to carry across the Niagara River on a rope. Would you shake the cable, or keep shouting at him, 'Blondin, stand up a little straighter—Blondin, stoop a little more—go a little faster—lean a little more to the north—lean a little more to the south'? No, you would hold your breath, as well as your tongue, and keep your hands off until he was safe over. The Government's carry-

ing an enormous weight. Untold treasures are in their hands. They are doing the best they can. Don't badger them. Keep silence, and we will get you safe across."

Lincoln did not fight battles himself, but he searched patiently for generals who could, and then he trusted them, and kept the public off their backs. As he said to General Grant, "If a man can't skin, he must hold a leg while somebody else does."

Imagine Lincoln, in his black frock coat and high hat, stealing out of the White House in the morning to kneel in the grass on the Mall and practice at a sheet of note paper with newly-invented rifles till the indignant sentries dash up shouting, to see the long figure unfold itself upward and recognize in the disturber the President of the United States!

Imagine him playing with his children on the White House lawn, "his coat-tails standing out straight and his black hair tousled

this way and that" as he dashes about, chased by his shrieking playmates!

Imagine him again and again asking little girls to kiss him, snatching them to his thin breast, fondling them with tears in his eyes!

Imagine him watching through weary nights by his son's deathbed, standing stricken beside the little coffin, and then, for the first time, turning to the Bible for consolation!

Imagine him entertaining his log-cabin cousin, Dennis Hanks, in the White House, and, when that simple soul disapproves of Secretary Stanton's arrogance and urges him to "kick the frisky little Yankee out," patiently answering, "It would be difficult to find another man to fill his place"!

Imagine him sitting in his nightshirt on the edge of young John Hay's bed, night after night, reading doggerel verses from the newspapers, cracking jokes or reciting from Shakespeare!

Imagine him signing a pardon for a young soldier sentenced to be shot and hearing the sobs of that mother waiting outside, "Thank God! Thank Lincoln! Pardoned! Oh, my boy! my boy!"

Imagine him facing the gray-haired father of another doomed soldier and saying. "If your son lives until I order him shot, he will live longer than ever Methuselah did"!

Imagine him sitting at the table day after day, his face cold, abstracted, his gray eyes "seeing something in the air" and hardly touching his food!

Imagine him on the night after the bloody loss of Chancellorsville—seventeen thousand killed, wounded and missing! Mr. Stoddard, sitting in the deserted White House, underneath Lincoln's room, has helped our imagination:

"But that sound, the slow, heavy, regular tread of the President's feet, pacing up and down in his room and thinking of Chancellorsville! A man's tread may well be heavy

Life mask of Lincoln while President. Observe the wasted features, the kindly, humorous mouth, and the reverential indications of the high top head

when there is such a load upon his shoulders as Lincoln is carrying. . . . He can hear, in his heart, the thunder of the Union and Confederate guns, and the shrieks and groans that rise on the lost battlefield. . . . Ten o'clock—and now and then there have been momentary breaks, as if he paused in turning at the wall; but no pause has lasted longer than for a few heart-beats. . . . Eleven o'clock—and it is as if a more silent kind of silence had been obtained, for the tread can be heard more distinctly, and a sort of thrill comes with it now and then. . . . There has been no sound from the President's room for a number of minutes, and he may be resting in his chair or writing. No; there it comes again, that mournfully monotonous tread, with its turnings at the wall. . . . Two o'clock comes, without another break in the steady tramp of Lincoln's lonely vigil. Three o'clock arrives, and your task is done, and you pass out almost stealthily . . . and the last

sound in your ears is the muffled beat of that footfall.

Before eight o'clock of the morning you are once more at the White House . . . look in at the President's room. . . . He is still there, and there is nothing to indicate that he has been out of it. . . . There upon the table, beside his cup of coffee, lies the draft of his fresh instructions to General Hooker, bidding him to push forward without any reference to Chancellorsville."

These are but fragmentary glimpses of the savior of the Union in his many-sided life during the war. But they help us to understand him in that tragic stretch of time when he plodded wearily between the White House and the telegraph room in the War Department to learn, day by day, what his generals at the front had to say.

It would be but vain repetition to picture him in silent, white-faced anguish, or in equally silent transports of joy and thanksgiving, all through the fighting days of

Shiloh, Stone River, Fredericksburg, Antietam, Gettysburg, Vicksburg, Chickamauga, the Wilderness, Spottsylvania and Petersburg, when Americans reddened American soil with the blood of Americans, and the ordinary dress of women and children throughout the country turned to black.

They said of him that he sometimes cracked jokes, Nero-like, while the continent shuddered at the slaughter of its bravest and best, and while the fate of the Union hung trembling in the balance.

"I must laugh or I will surely die," he explained to John Hay.

XIV

TO Lincoln the preservation of the Union was of much greater importance than the freedom of the negro race.

No one who has ever glanced through his speeches and writings can have any doubt about that.

When he signed the Proclamation of Emancipation he did it solely to save the Union. It was his mind, rather than his heart, that inspired the deed; for his inclination was to recognize the constitutional property right in slaves and to secure their emancipation by paying for them.

This reverence for the Constitution and defense of all its guarantees and sanctions, even when the argument advantaged those who raised their hands against the government, is not the least of Lincoln's claim to the love and gratitude of his countrymen.

Not even the monstrous emotions of a fratricidal war could shake his determination to recognize slavery as a property right confirmed by the nation, so long as the nation itself could survive. Nor could the alternate appeals and abuse of the New England abolitionist fanatics make him forget that the rebel South was defending what it believed to be its legal rights.

There is not a single note of bitterness or hatred for the South in all that he said or wrote up to the day when a Southern hand struck down the South's best friend.

The time came, however, when there was no longer any hope that emancipation by compensation would be accepted as a means of restoring peace.

Then, and then only, Lincoln considered unconditional emancipation as an act of war in defence of the Union and as a means of peace.

Thirty-four years afterwards General Longstreet, one of the most distinguished

soldiers of the Confederacy, stood before thousands of Union veterans in Atlanta, white-haired and shaking with emotion, and said:

"Your loss would have been our loss and your gain has been our gain."

The President had held out as long as possible against what he afterwards considered "the central act of his administration and the greatest event of the nineteenth century." To members of Congress who urged him to free the negroes and muster them into the army he made a military argument:

"Gentlemen, I have put thousands of muskets into the hands of loyal citizens of Tennessee, Kentucky and North Carolina. They have said that they could defend themselves if they had guns. I have given them the guns. Now, these men do not believe in mustering in the negro. If I do it, these thousands of muskets will be turned against us. We should lose more than we should gain."

Address delivered at the dedication of the
Cemetery at Gettysburg.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers
brought forth on this continent, a new na-
tion, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated
to the proposition that all men are cre-
ated equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war,
testing whether that nation, or any nation
so conceived and so dedicated, can long
endure. We are met on a great battle-field
of that war. We have come to dedicate a
portion of that field, as a final resting
place for those who here gave their lives
that that nation might live. It is alto-
gether fitting and proper that we should
do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedi-
cate — we can not consecrate — we can not
hallow — this ground. The brave men, liv-
ing and dead, who struggled here, have con-
secrated it, far above our poor power to add
or detract. The world will little note, nor
long remember what we say here, but it can
never forget what they did here. It is for us
the living, rather, to be dedicated here to
the unfinished work which they who fou-
ght here have thus far so nobly advanced.
It is rather for us to be here dedicated to
the great task remaining before us — that
from these honored dead we take increased
devotion to that cause for which they gave
the last full measure of devotion — that
we here highly resolve that these dead shall
not have died in vain — that this nation,
under God, shall have a new birth of free-
dom — and that government of the people,
by the people, for the people, shall not per-
ish from the earth.

Abraham Lincoln.

November 19. 1863.

Autograph copy of Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg

On July 22, 1862, Lincoln called his Cabinet together and read to them a draft of a proposed proclamation freeing all the slaves in the United States.

Secretary Seward, however, advised delay, pointing out the fact that the Union arms had sustained repeated defeats, and that a proclamation of emancipation, issued at such a time, might be "viewed as the last measure of an exhausted government." He advised the President to wait until a victory was won and then "give it to the country supported by military success." Lincoln consented to wait.

How the anti-slavery forces bellowed and threatened! How Wendell Phillips lashed the President! How Greeley scored him in the *Tribune!* How the abolitionist committees poured into the White House and raged against delay!

Poor Lincoln! He who had scoffed and blasphemed in his rough, hard youth in New Salem, turned to God for guidance. There

is nothing in history more touching than the spectacle of this strong man, struggling between his sense of duty and the pitiless clamor of his country, raising his soul like a child to its father.

And while he communed with God he did not fail to use all the resources of his nature to find a safe, sure way for the Republic he loved so well. He drew strength from God, but he continued to observe, compare and analyze conditions. A Chicago delegation went to him and declared that it was God's will that he should free the slaves. Lincoln drew himself up and said:

"I hope it will not be irreverent for me to say that if it is probable that God would reveal His will to others on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed He would reveal it directly to me. . . . These are not, however, the days of miracles, and I suppose it will be granted that I am not to expect a direct revelation. I must study the plain physical facts of the case,

ascertain what is possible, and learn what appears to be wise and right."

The signal that Lincoln waited for came on September 17, 1862, when McClellan defeated Lee's army at Antietam, inflicting a loss of more than twenty-five thousand men in killed, wounded and missing.

Then came one of the strangest sights in the life of the American government, a spectacle that reveals the profoundly mystic side of Lincoln.

The Cabinet was called together again to consider a proclamation of emancipation.

There was Stanton, the Secretary of War, short, deep-chested, thick-bearded, dogmatic; Chase, the Secretary of the Treasury, tall, shaven, dignified, learned, able; Seward, the Secretary of State, slim, erect, hawk-eyed, polished, haughty; white-bearded Welles, the Secretary of the Navy; tall, courtly Blair, the Postmaster General; heavy-faced, ponderous Smith, the Secretary of the Interior; and silent, shrewd,

studious Bates, the snowy-headed Attorney General.

When this group of hard-headed and experienced politicians was solemnly gathered around the table in the Cabinet room, Lincoln opened a humorous book by Artemus Ward and began to read a chapter in his shrill, singsongy voice, pausing now and then to join the chuckling of his hearers.

Stanton alone sat with thunder in his eyes and a frown on his brow. The tendency of the President to relieve a strain on the nerves, or clear the mind by a good laugh, exasperated him to the point of fury.

Suddenly the laughter vanished from Lincoln's voice and there came into his strong face the look that he is remembered by in his greatest moods.

Then he poured out his mind and soul. In a few words he announced that he had decided to emancipate the slaves by proclamation, and explained his reasons. Looking earnestly into the faces of his advisers, he

informed them that he had left the decision to God, that he had made a promise to God, and that he would keep that promise.

Think of President Roosevelt making such a statement to Secretary Root, Secretary Cortelyou, Secretary Wright, Attorney General Bonaparte and the other members of his Cabinet!

There was no self-consciousness in Lincoln's manner as he made this extraordinary avowal. He spoke simply and with an air of intense conviction. His soul was in his eyes. There was peace in his face.

"He remarked," wrote Secretary Welles that night, "that he had made a vow—a covenant—that if God gave us the victory in the approaching battle [Antietam] he would consider it an indication of Divine will, and that it was duty to move forward in the cause of emancipation. It might be thought strange, he said, that he had in this way submitted the disposal of matters when the way was not clear to his mind what he should do.

God had decided this question in favor of the slaves. He was satisfied it was right—was confirmed and strengthened in his action by the vow and the results. His mind was fixed, his decision made, but he wished his paper announcing his course as correct in terms as it could be made without any change in his determination."

What a scene!—the master politician of his times, the ugly rail-splitter and country politician, whose very appearance excited smiles, surrounded by shrewd, calculating, learned, world-hardened men, and telling them gravely that he had left to the decision of God the question of banishing slavery from American soil.

It was so impressive, so extraordinary, that even Secretary Chase wrote it all down as soon as he got home. Here is his statement of Lincoln's words:

"When the rebel army was at Frederick, I determined, as soon as it should be driven out of Maryland, to issue a proclamation of

Lincoln statue, E. Capitol and Thirteenth Street, Washington

emancipation, such as I thought most likely to be useful. I said nothing to any one, but I made the promise to myself, and (hesitating a little) to my Maker. The rebel army is now driven out, and I am going to fulfill that promise. I have got you together to hear what I have written down. I do not wish your advice about the main matter, for that I have determined for myself. This I say without intending anything but respect for any one of you. . . . There is no way in which I can have any other man put where I am. I am here; I must do the best I can, and bear the responsibility of taking the course which I feel I ought to take."

There was nothing Oriental about Lincoln. He made much of human wisdom. He listened reverently to the voice of the people. He bowed to the Constitution, in spite of the sanctions it gave to slavery, because it represented the deliberate will of the majority.

But that incomparable hour in the White

House proves that in the stress of contending human passions, almost crushed by the weight of his office, with heart and mind overwhelmed, Lincoln turned from earth to Heaven, and, like Elijah on Mount Carmel among the priests of Baal, cried to God for a sign. "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God."

As Secretary Seward put the Proclamation of Emancipation in his pocket and the members of the Cabinet withdrew from the most thrilling council ever known in that place, Lincoln's countenance was calmer than it had been for many weeks.

The proclamation freeing all slaves in rebellious States, together with a plan for emancipation by compensation, was submitted to Congress. To the very last Lincoln hoped that the South might accept his plan to abolish slavery by paying for the slaves. His appeal to Congress was notable:

"The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to

the latest generation. We say we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows that we do know how to save it. We—even we here—hold the power and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free—honorable in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last, best hope of earth."

On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued the proclamation that ended slavery forever under the American flag.

XV

WEARYING of McClellan's delays and excuses for not fighting, Lincoln removed him and put Burnside in command of the Army of the Potomac. When Burnside fought at Fredericksburg the President appeared at the War Department telegraph office in carpet slippers and dressing gown, and waited all day without food for the shocking news of defeat that did not come until four o'clock the next morning—ten thousand dead and wounded.

The President calmly endured the general abuse that followed this disaster. Then he removed Burnside and put General Hooker in his place, writing to him these characteristic words:

"I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the army

and the government needed a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship."

Lincoln went to Hooker's army and reviewed it. As the hundred thousand men marched by they watched him eagerly as he sat on his horse, tall, angular and in black frock coat, among the glittering generals. Seymour Dodd has described the scene:

"None of us to our dying day can forget that countenance! From its presence we marched directly onward toward our camp, and as soon as route step was ordered and the men were free to talk, they spoke thus to each other: 'Did you ever see such a look on any man's face?' 'He is bearing the burdens of the nation.' 'It is an awful load; it is killing him.' 'Yes, that is so; he is not long for this world!'

"Concentrated in that one great, strong, yet tender face, the agony of the life or death struggle of the hour was revealed as we had never seen it before. With new understanding we knew why we were soldiers."

A month later came the dispatch announcing the slaughter and defeat of Chancellorsville. Noah Brooks read it to Lincoln:

"The appearance of the President, as I read aloud these fateful words was piteous. Never, as long as I knew him, did he seem to be so broken up, so dispirited, and so ghostlike. Clasping his hands behind his back, he walked up and down the room saying, 'My God! My God! What will the country say? What will the country say?'"

Not that Lincoln feared criticism or even denunciation. He does not know the greatest and noblest American who thinks that. No, it was the torturing, intolerable thought that it might be his dreadful fate to be the last President of the United States, the

haunting idea which, a generation later, was written by the loyal, iron-souled Grant on his deathbed: "Anything that could have prolonged the war a year beyond the time that it did finally close would probably have exhausted the North to such an extent that they might then have abandoned the contest and agreed to a separation."

The shedding of blood grieved Lincoln. Even when Grant won Vicksburg, and Lee's gallant army was defeated in the three days' battle at Gettysburg, his joy was overcast by the thought of the dead and dying on both sides. All through the bloodiest days of the war he went to the hospitals in Washington. His heart was with the common soldiers. And he was tender to the Confederate wounded. He never could forget that they were his countrymen. Nor could he withstand an appeal to pardon a young soldier sentenced to death. Again and again he left his bed, after a day and evening of exhausting toil, to save the life of some distant

wretched youth condemned to die at daybreak.

Is there anything in the whole range of English literature more solemnly beautiful and heart-moving than the note he wrote to the widow Bixby, of Boston?

"DEAR MADAM: I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously in the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have

laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

A. LINCOLN."

But in his determination to save the Republic no horror could shake his resolution. It is no small part of his title to the love of the nation to-day that one so merciful and tender-hearted could suffer the frightful shocks of years of slaughter and waste without wavering from his duty.

His sense of nationality, his refusal to consider the American people save as a whole, was expressed in that immortal speech at the dedication of the cemetery on the Gettysburg battlefield in November, 1863.

Edward Everett, who was looked upon as the most eloquent of living Americans, was the orator of the occasion. The invitation to Lincoln was an afterthought.

Yet who can remember anything of the two hours' polished speech of Everett, and

who can forget a sentence of the two hundred and sixty-five words which Lincoln spoke almost before his hundred thousand listeners realized the dignity and imperishable beauty of his utterance?

"Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We are met to dedicate a portion of it as the final resting place of those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate —we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men living and dead who struggled here have consecrated

it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work that they have thus far so nobly carried on. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to the cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

Even after that Lincoln offered pardon to every one who would return to the old allegiance, save the leaders of the rebellion. His heart cried out to the bleeding South.

Yet his head was steady, and when he put the sword of the nation into the hands of

Grant, with Sherman and Sheridan to help him; when the army swept all before it, and when, after reviewing Grant's forces in front of grim Petersburg, Lincoln called for half a million fresh soldiers, he had the wit and shrewdness to silence Horace Greeley's senseless clamor for peace negotiations by writing to the officious editor:

"If you can find any person anywhere professing to have any proposition of Jefferson Davis in writing, for peace, embracing the restoration of the Union and abandonment of slavery, whatever else it embraces, say to him he may come to me with you; and that if he really brings such proposition, he shall at the least have safe conduct with the paper (and without publicity if he chooses) to the point where you shall have met him. The same if there be two or more persons."

After his second election to the Presidency, and while pressing his generals on to the end, Lincoln continued to show how free

One of the last photographs of Lincoln. The picture shows plainly the cares of office

was his soul from bitterness toward the South. The climax came in his second inaugural speech, when a million soldiers were executing his orders in the field. It was the last, supreme outpouring of his great and gentle soul before peace came in the surrender at Appomattox, to be followed by his own bloody death at the hands of a fanatic.

Those who saw him on the day of his second inauguration say that he was thinner and more wrinkled than ever. His face had a ghastly, gray pallor. There was an expression of indescribable mourning in his eyes. After speaking for some time to the crowd there came a strangely beautiful look into his wasted features as he drew himself to his full height and raised his hands high. Then came that matchless outburst which is repeated by hundreds of thousands of American schoolboys every year:

"Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may

speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."

After he was shot by John Wilkes Booth in Ford's theater on April 14, 1865, Lincoln never spoke again. He had seen the stars and stripes raised in Richmond. He had seen the end of human slavery on the Ameri-

can continent. The nation was one again. But he was to speak no death-bed message. It was all in that last great speech: "With malice toward none; with charity for all."

For hours they stood about him as he lay moaning or struggling for breath, his wife, his Cabinet officers, his pastor, secretary and doctors. At daybreak the troubled look vanished from his face. There was absolute stillness, followed by a trembling prayer by the pastor.

"Now he belongs to the ages," said the deep voice of Secretary Stanton.

No, while Lincoln lives in the heart of the nation, it is idle to think that the Republic can be corrupt or cowardly.

There were less than nine millions of Americans when he was born. These have become almost ninety millions. The national wealth has grown to more than a hundred billions of dollars. The flag he de-

fended now flies over the Philippines, Hawaii and Porto Rico. The law-resisting millionaire, the "captain of industry" and the "tariff baron" have taken the place of the slaveholder.

Yet the love of Lincoln deepens with increasing years; and a century after his birth in a Kentucky log cabin, and nearly forty-four years after his martyrdom, the American people answered the charge that they had outlived their early ideals by the tribute they paid to the memory of their humblest-born, plainest, most beloved leader and President.

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